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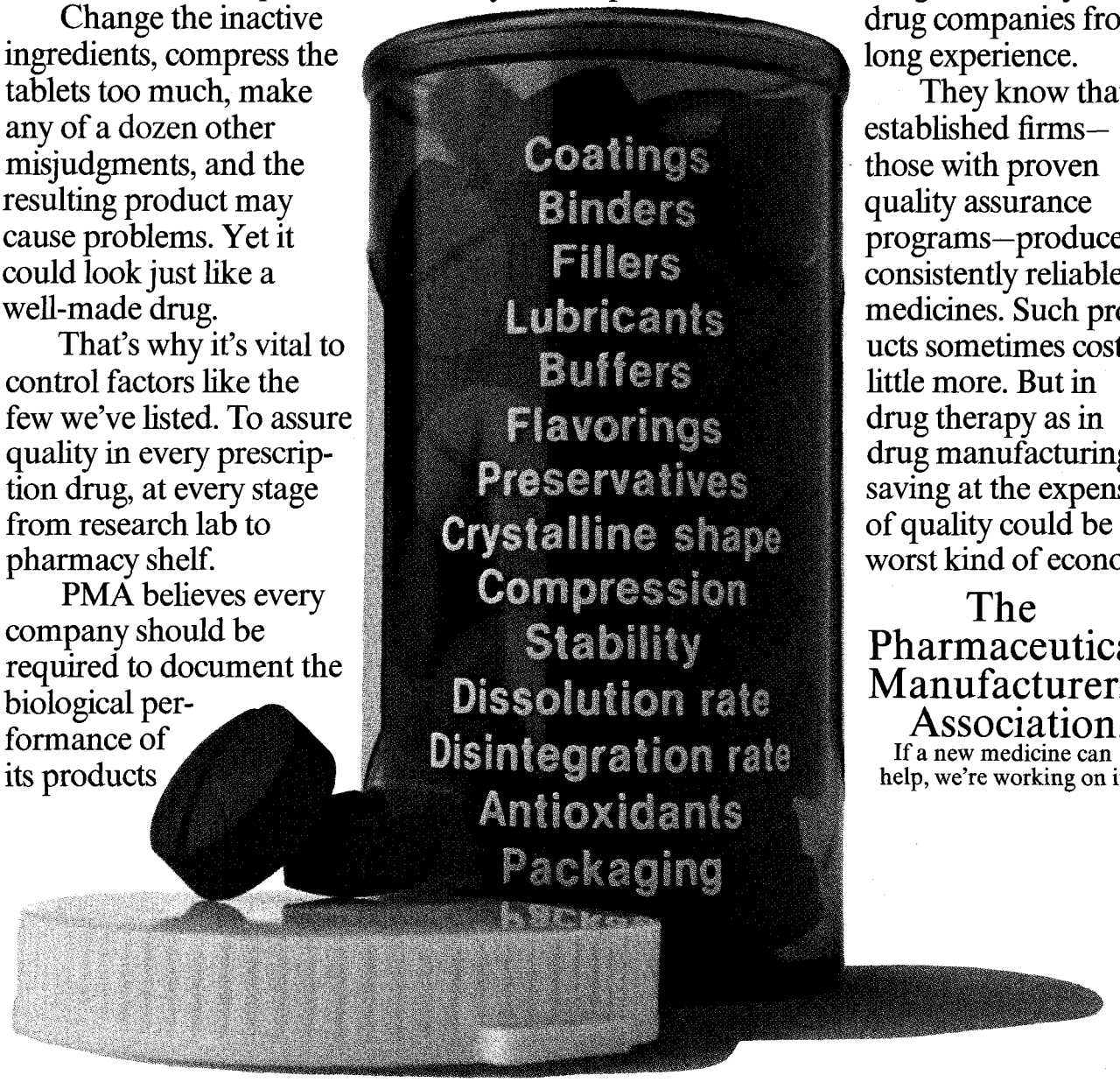

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TRB

from Washington
January 6, 1979

Quality of Life

I look at my wife enviously. Her PQL index tops mine. I look at the map enviously. Iceland's PQL index tops the United States's. What's PQL? I hope to adjust to the new statistical concept before long (as I am tardily adjusting to writing "9" on the numerals of the new year). PQL? It's the "Physical Quality of Life Index," of course. It's been invented by the demographers as an international yardstick, and it makes GNP (Gross National Product—the money income for all goods and services of a nation) old hat.

Have you ever looked back and said nostalgically, "Yes, Grandpa worked harder, but he got satisfactions out of life I don't get"? You are mentally saying that his "quality of life" index was higher. The demographers haven't been daring enough to compare *spiritual* qualities of life (that would be SQL). They modestly emphasize the "physical" in their new term. It's taken years to invent and has crept in barely announced, but it already is a valuable concept and never more so than in a modern world churning with international comparisons.

In 1973 the UN secretary-general recognized the need for a supplement to per capita GNP as a unit for measuring progress in addressing human needs. The US Foreign Assistance Act of 1973 (and all subsequent amendments) required that appropriate criteria be established to assess the progress in meeting the needs of the poor majority in developing countries. The international group called the Club of Rome called in 1976 for the development of a quality of life index. And so, in 1977, the non-profit Overseas Development Council crashed through with its PQLI, now elaborated again in its most recent year-end summary—*US & World Development Agenda: 1979* ($5.95; Praeger paperback).

The idea is simple. Just take three basic physical factors, universally conceded to be desirable—high life expectancy, high literacy and low infant mortality—average them together by an easy formula and come out with a practical PQLI. Things jump out at you suddenly as you read the new tables that you would never have noticed in the old dry-as-dust GNP figures.

My favorite case is Sri Lanka. It used to be Ceylon. You all know Sri Lanka of course—population 14 million; island republic in the Indian Ocean; highest peak Pidurutalagala. This area is the teacher's pet among do-good demographers. It has a miserable per capita income, below $200. (Compare Kuwait, with $15,580.) But it has a life expectancy at birth of 68 years and a literacy rate of 81 percent (compared to the United States with 73 and 99). To be sure, it has a high infant mortality rate (47 per 1000 live births), but even so when the three criteria are averaged it comes out with a smashing PQLI figure of 82—and Kuwait trails behind with 75. (Chad, in Africa, has 18.) Sri Lanka has pulled itself up in 50 years to the United States in the 1930s. How did it do it? Simple. It provides "the highest level of efficiently distributed governmental services of any low-income country" which has "contributed significantly" to its PQL index.

(If the United States had Sri Lanka next door instead of Mexico—a yawning disparity of income despite its extraordinary petroleum riches—we probably wouldn't be getting half a million illegal immigrants each year: Mexico's per capita GNP is five times Sri Lanka's but it has lower life expectancy and literacy, and higher infant mortality. Its PQLI is 75.)

The United States is the world's richest nation. Does that mean it tops others in the three factors of PQLI? No, it doesn't. Per capital gross national product is the number of people divided into total output of goods and services. Russia's is only $2760; ours is $7890. (World average of 169 countries is $200.) But the oil-glutted OPEC countries have higher figures, of course, than either superpower, and so do Sweden and Switzerland. Olga and Petya, the Russian couple, have a life expectancy of 69 years; John and Mary, the Americans, top them with 73 years. The Russian and American families both have a near-perfect literacy rate. Infant mortality is higher in Russia than in the US—28 per 1000 compared to 15 per 1000 here. In this curious game the US consequently wins over its great nuclear rival—our PQLI is 95; Russia only rates 91.

But America's infant mortality rate is still a bit shocking. It is the best argument I know for national health insurance. With our wealth, technological skill and obsession with hygiene we are still below 17 other nations in dealing with infant mortality, including Hong King, Singapore and Iceland. In fact Iceland is ahead of the US in PQLI—97 compared to the US's 95. Iceland is tied with Norway and Sweden as best in the world.

This new "quality" game has certain advantages over GNP. It also has certain oddities. "Infant mortality" is a sensitive index of the availability of clean water, the condition of the home environment and the well-being of mothers. "Life expectancy" reflects nutrition and many environmental factors outside the home. "Literacy" is a useful indicator of state interest in schools and the position of women in society. But the statistics of a lot of countries are unreliable. China, for example (PQLI 71)—how does anybody know if its literacy is 50 or 70 percent? Both figures are given. And again, the lowest figures of life-quality are in the hungry nations of Africa; figures here also are only approximate. The overall index is a tragic 14 for Mali, Niger and Guinea-Bissau.

An aggravating figure also (to men) is the greater longevity of women. Men live longer than women in India, it turns out, but for either side the average is below 40 years. In the US, life expectancy for men is currently 67.9. The stronger sex lives five years longer—75.5 years. I hesitate to admit this but, with that advantage of longer life, American women have a PQLI of 97 whereas males trail at 89.9.

There's a savage little addendum in this table of human needs—the amount the jealous nations spend on armaments. Yes, a quarter of humanity goes to bed hungry, the annual income of a third of the human race currently averages only $166, but the people of spaceship Earth spent $400 billion a year for arms. That's the HFI statistic; the Human Folly Index.

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THE NEW REPUBLIC

A Journal of Politics and the Arts, Vol. 180, No. 1, Issue 3339, January 6, 1979. Published weekly (except the issues of July 14, July 28, August 11, September 1) and distributed by The New Republic, Inc., 1220 19th Street, N.W. Washington, DC 20036. Phone (202) 331-7494. Single copy, $1.00; Yearly subscriptions, $24; foreign, $27; students $17.

Send all remittances and correspondence about subscriptions, undelivered copies and changes of address to Subscription Service Department, The New Republic, P.O. Box 58, Whitinsville, MA 01588. Unsolicited manuscripts are welcome, but cannot be considered or returned unless accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope.

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Item g. Second class postage paid under publication number 382020 at Washington, DC and additional mailing offices. Indexed in Readers' Guide.

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Cover: illustration by Jan Drews.

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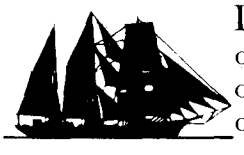

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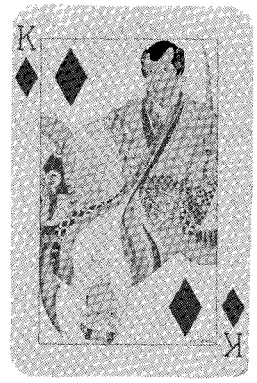
THE NEW REPUBLIC

January 6, 1979



The China Card

The defense of small countries and threatened peoples has never counted much for Jimmy Carter. Already during his campaign for the presidency he signaled the Russians that he would not be a serious obstacle to any mischief they might undertake in Yugoslavia. In what he clearly takes to be a major coup—amidst the chimney ash of the Middle East negotiations, the stalled SALT talks, the shambles of the regime of our pal the Shah, and the transparent failure of Carter's Saudi diplomacy over both oil prices and peace—the administration has now just about told the Chinese government in Peking that Taiwan is theirs for the taking. Of course, we expect that they won't return Taiwan, in Communist Party Chairman Hua Kuo-feng's chilling phrase, to "the embrace of the motherland" too quickly, at least not in the coming 12 months. Moreover, we'd certainly prefer that they not take the prosperous island and its 17 million people by force. But, as we've been hearing from the State Department pulpits, we don't even have private assurances on these matters. So much for the Taiwanese. Let those who count on us be warned.

There is no question that the US and the People's Republic should have diplomatic relations, and good relations too. We should have had them, or tried to, for over a generation. Certainly we should never have maintained the fiction that the semi-retired warlords in forced exile on Formosa constituted the rightful government of China. In one of those painful ironies of history, it was Richard Nixon (doubtless persuaded by Henry Kissinger) who liberated us from our emotional commitment to the notion of one China run by Chiang Kai-shek's Kuomintang and its heirs.

Carter and his supporters seemed to assume that the most recent arrangements would bring the administration nearly unanimous plaudits. But once again they have underestimated the idealism of the American people, and our sense of moral obligation to nations and peoples trying to elude the grasp of tyranny. For, despite the much-heralded thaw in the latest version of the new China, a tyranny is exactly what China still is and is likely to remain. Its people are still in intellectual political and moral chains, not to mention economic chains, even if the chains are a bit looser for the moment. Confronted by opposition they did not expect (that is, opposition across the political spectrum), White House supporters are now rather more defensively trying to depict Carter as an instrument of historical inevitability. Whatever he and Zbigniew Brzezinski have negotiated with Peking follows irresistibly, we've been told, from the Shanghai Communiqué of 1972. But nothing is irresistible, a wise man once said, except that which is not resisted.

The terms of the new Sino-American deal are the terms set down long ago by the Chinese. And why should they have won in bargaining now what they could not win six years ago? Would they have refused our technical assistance or investments if we declined to break our ties with Taiwan? Indeed, if the current regime is so much more flexible and conciliatory than the one chaired by Chairman Mao, why did they insist upon—and why do we accept—the harshest conditions for normalization of relations? Yes, the Chinese did want a symbolic acceptance of their dominion over Taiwan. But that did not mean that we had to provide it. Surely Peking would not for sheerly symbolic reasons sabotage a liaison with the US that is of enormous strategic importance to China. And if they would, what does that say for them as partners or for us as bargainers at the green table?

One suspects, of course, that it is not merely

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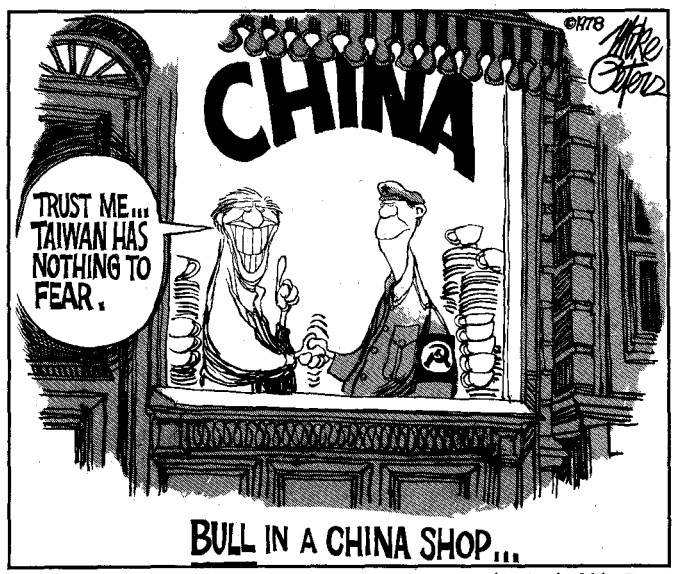
symbolic recognition of the People's Republic's sovereignty over Taiwan that was at stake. This is why the minimal concessions we obtained from Peking seem no more than a fig leaf covering our betrayal, not so much of the government of Taiwan as of its people. Neither a few defensive weapons sold to Taiwan nor continued trade with it will stop the erosion of will for an independent life among the island's population. Skilled diplomacy, with a bit of backbone, should have been able to provide a way to recognize the reality on the mainland without ignoring the reality of a thriving, independent, pro-Western society on Taiwan.

And what have we gotten for changing the reality we choose to ignore? Not much, it appears. It is unlikely that the Soviets will be tamed or tempered by this diplomatic development. Instead we may find them more belligerent rather than less, a situation which President Carter's scandalously deceptive rendering of Leonid Brezhnev's message to him on the subject could not obscure. The China card, once played against Russia, is played for good. It may have made sense as graduate-seminar geopolitics, but it will not work in the real world. Part of the problem is that both Carter and Brzezinski are impatient and impulsive men. They have an idea and they try it. There'll always be other ideas to come. But the larger part of the problem is that they do not know how to bargain. Always seeking an opportunity to demonstrate deftness in negotiation, the president comes out looking, at best, half deft.

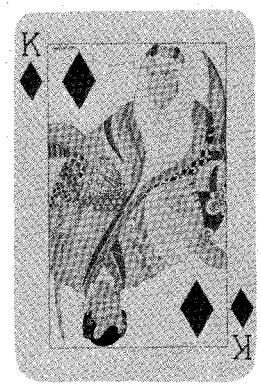
In negotiating with the Chinese, for example, we did not try to get them to trade off their very concrete and critical needs against their ideological desires. We did not even try to get them to curb their murderous clients in Phnom Penh. Indeed, one finds at State and among Brzezinski's partisans a barely repressed sympathy for the Cambodians who are, after all, anti-Vietnamese who are, after all, in turn pro-Soviet. The enemy of my enemy is my friend.

In this country, the most exuberant enthusiasts for Carter's card tricks are American corporations. Not chastened by what whould have been the sobering experience of post-detente commerce with the Soviets, the American multinationals now see 800 million new customers for everything from Coca Cola to computers: a new market for our entire flotilla of technology and junk. *The Wall Street Journal*, clear-eyed as usual about the illusions that may grip the capitalist class, tried on December 28 to put up some cautionary signs, though they probably won't help. China most likely will not pay us with gold or hard currency, as they will in great measure pay the harder-nosed Japanese. They will pay us with our own credits, deflated dollar after deflated dollar, which will have the side-effect of intensifying the capital crunch at home.

All of this amounts to a pathetic performance for a great power, and yet another blot on the presidency of its current steward, Jimmy Carter.



drawing by Mike Peters



The Arab Card

What has happened in the Egyptian-Israeli talks? There is no lack of explanations. Diplomacy conducted in public once again has proven disastrous: Sadat and Begin have locked themselves into positions from which there is no easy exit; and Carter, tired of mediation has decided that bullying Israel is the only way out, and so only made things worse. For President Carter, it was a reversion to his earlier habits. The Egyptians, pressed by Saudi Arabia, raised the negotiating ante and sought concessions they had failed to win at Camp David. The Israelis are having second thoughts about their promises concerning West Bank automony. Some say the issue is "linkage" between peace with Egypt and developments on the West Bank. Some say the issue is the priority of Egypt's defense treaties with other Arab states. Sinai oil is also a real issue. And so on. There is truth in all these explanations, but we suspect a deeper trouble, which has to do with the structure of the Camp David agreements and the American role in carrying them out.

Camp David was a twofold agreement: first there was a substantive arrangement about the Sinai; then there was a procedural arrangement for the West Bank. Israel's territorial concessions were specified in the Sinai, left open on the West Bank. Given this distinction, Sadat agreed (it was his only concession,

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Correspondence

Public opinion polls

To the editors:

Stephen Chapman's article on "the public opinion hustle" (*TNR*, November 25) was provocative to say the least.

Pat Caddell is amply able to fend for himself against the serious contentions of the article. What is disturbing about the piece is its unsubstantiated extension of the argument to other polling organizations who perpetrate a "scam" on clients and the public.

Yes, there is a danger that the data of public opinion polls are artifacts of the questions asked and not reflections of actual public sentiments. No, not all opinion data can be dismissed as artificial and part of a great hustle. The point has often been made that without the polls, the agonies of Vietnam and Watergate might have wrenched the nation longer than they did.

Journalistic scrutiny of the polling industry is appropriate—indeed essential. However, unsubstantiated extrapolation of allegations to the entire polling fraternity is careless journalism.

Albert H. Cantril
National Council on Public Polls
Washington, DC

The nuclear power debate

To the editors:

For the past few months *TNR*, as well as other weekly magazines, has been bought and paid for by various corporations, systems and institutes all proclaiming the wonders of nuclear fission. Most recently an ad presenting "One side of an issue facing the electric power industry" filled your entire back cover (a space usually reserved for the Marlboro Man) with unreferenced claims regarding some aspects of the nuclear power *debate* (*TNR*, October 7). I emphasize the word debate because many of those claims are being challenged by responsible environmentalists, renowned scientists, economists and humanitarians. Unfortunately most of these people cannot present the other side of the issue in such obvious places and with such frequency because of economic constraints.

In that ad we are told that nuclear power makes economic sense by reducing our dependence on foreign oil and gas—an attractive proposition. Some other economic facts which were not mentioned, however, are not quite as attractive. The cost of construction, the rising price of uranium, the cost of waste disposal measures and the eventual cost of decommissioning (each plant has a life expectancy of approximately 40 years, after which it must be decommissioned at a cost estimated between 50 percent and 150 percent of the original price tag) are so staggering that the entire industry has received only two domestic orders in the past year. Even these costs probably could be justified if the actual output of each plant was as originally planned. The fact is, however, that the promise of an abundant cheap energy source has not been fulfilled. In Japan, for example, the nuclear plants are operating at only 38 percent capacity.

Another general statement that "several acceptable methods are available" for the disposal of nuclear wastes typifies the underlying deceit of this ad. The current technical quandry over waste disposal centers on the only method even remotely within our level of expertise—waste burial. But in order to proceed with this alternative, several questions must be answered. What is the earthquake potential? What is the underground water flow pattern and will it contaminate the river system? What measures must be taken to assure isolation for periods of time ranging from 600 to 250,000 years?

The final section of the ad exhorts the federal government to take responsible action today! I wholeheartedly endorse that plan. Let the feds stop the huge subsidies to the insatiable nuclear industry. Let them transfer those funds to support renewable energy sources and, most importantly, to bolster efforts at conservation—a trite phrase that is always mentioned and never heeded.

D. Luke Magnotto, MD
Seattle, Washington

P.S. Please return the Marlboro Man to his proper place. He may insult our lungs but not our intelligence.

Food stamp fraud

To the editors:

Nick Kotz in his article on food stamps ("Feeding the Hungry," *TNR*, November 25) presents the good the program has done and can do in the future; however, he glosses over one very important point concerning the program. The comptroller general of the United States, in a report to the Congress, July 18, 1977 (CED-77-112), has stated: "The Government is losing over half a billion dollars annually because of overissued food stamps benefits caused by errors, misrepresentations, and suspected fraud by recipients, and by errors by local food stamp offices. For every $100 of the more than $5 billion in annual benefits issued nationally, overissuances account for about $12; only about 12 cents of that $12 has been recovered. . . ."

The effect of recipient abuse on the food stamp program and the "overissuance of food stamps benefits is a serious problem and a major drain on Federal Funds."

Cheer number two should go to the meddlesome bureaucrat who establishes a workable system for reducing this waste; which in turn would put some internal integrity into the food stamp program.

K.M. Stone
Otsego County Department of Social Services
Otsego County, New York

Cancel my subscription again

To the editors:

I let my subscription lapse last year after you came out in favor of the neutron bomb. I sorely missed Canaday, Kauffmann and all the book reviewers. A month ago I subscribed again, and what arrived but Robert Moss on Iran, blaming the situation there on "trendy university students" and "Marxist elements." Only at the very end, in an aside, is it noted that the regime there has been "undoubtedly . . . oppressive and corrupt."

Such a view of that situation, even given our dependence on oil, is not in our self-interest. What self survives, when it holds such a view of things? I'm not even religious, but I'm a sculptor and know that life is sacred and that there is something—spirit, soul, call it what you will—that is lost when political stability is more important than the people being stabilized.

I cannot in conscience give a dime of my money to support your magazine. Hold my bill and cancel the subscription.

Dana Collins
Pittsfield, Massachusetts

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since he got back every bit of Egyptian territory) to sign not a *separate* but a *prior* peace—before the future of the West Bank had been determined. Long-range solutions for the West Bank would wait upon the actual experience of autonomy and upon negotiations among the parties concerned. That is the point at which King Hussein of Jordan balked and cemented his relationship with the "rejection front," now bolstered by the renewed fraternity of Prince Fahd of Saudi Arabia. Hussein wanted a guaranteed outcome, and the questions he addressed on television to President Carter were nothing more than a series of demands for substantive rather than merely procedural concessions. Hussein simply recapitulated the traditional position of those "moderate" Arabs who say that they are willing to talk with Israel, but who are actually willing to talk only if they are promised everything they want in advance. There is to be no bargaining, no give and take. Sadat in Jerusalem and at Camp David seemed to have broken with that position and achieved a more genuine moderation. That break was a key factor making agreement possible, though this seems hardly to have been understood even by the American government.

Hussein's unhappiness about beginning with a procedural agreement on the West Bank was shared by at least some officials in the White House and at the State Department. In response to the king's questions, Harold Saunders rushed off to the Middle East to assure Hussein and a variety of West Bank notables that the agreed-upon procedures had or would have a predetermined outcome. Sitting like a proconsul in Jerusalem, Saunders brought forth the familiar vision of a "comprehensive settlement," as if the negotiations stipulated in the Camp David agreements had no real meaning—as if, in fact, issues that had not been discussed at all had instead already been settled in favor of the Arabs. The Saunders mission was the beginning of the unraveling of the peace process, though it was no more than a reapplication of Carter's discredited pre-Camp David Middle East policies. How could Sadat ask for less than the Americans were promising? And how could Begin defend Palestinian autonomy against internal critics on the right and the left if it was not to be a test of Palestinian intentions, a basis for negotiations, but only a waystation on a path already mapped toward plenary Palestinian sovereignty?

The procedures agreed to at Camp David probably will produce a Palestinian "entity" of one sort or another. But what sort? With what boundaries? Subject to what political and diplomatic constraints? With what security arrangements? Linked to Jordan or to Israel, and in what way? All these questions remain to be answered. And it is vital to Israel that these negotiations be serious and that they reflect local and immediate realities, not Arab nationalist dreams or American diplomatic pipe dreams. It will be hard enough for Israel to make the concessions it will have to make on the West Bank. At least let those concessions be made to real negotiating partners, as part of a real bargaining process and in exchange for concrete returns in the way of security and peace.

This is what the United States government should be saying to Hussein and the Palestinians: there cannot be guaranteed outcome in any good-faith negotiations. Both sides take risks when they begin talking. But these are risks worth taking and, in any case, *there is no other way.*

But, of course, there is another way, toward which Sadat is now reaching on behalf of his Arab brethren. The US can serve as proxy for the Arabs in the negotiations with Israel. We already have demonstrated our willingness to do that, which is why President Carter is increasingly being perceived around the world not merely as pro-Arab but as actually anti-Israel. It is also why the Egyptians insist that Carter should become a "full partner" in the continuing peace process. Carter has duly mouthed the phrase; Saunders gave it concrete embodiment; and Secretary of State Vance, when he arrived in Jerusalem for Golda Meir's funeral, carrying Egyptian proposals which he had already endorsed, was acting it out. But it is a dangerous role, holding forth at best the prospect of a proxy peace which the US could not insure, at worst that of no peace at all. A genuine settlement can only be worked out among the parties, and the US is not a party, whatever its interests as a world power, in the Arab-Israeli dispute. We surely cannot expect the Arabs to refrain from recriminations against Israel when recriminations against Israel seem to be President Carter's reflexive response to any impasse. Neither American public opinion nor the Congress has shown any sympathy for Carter's preconceived designs for the Middle East. The proper American role is that of a mediator, patiently pursuing the next compromise, easing the way toward small agreements. The sooner we return to that role, the better for Arabs and Israelis alike.

White House Watch

Carter and China

This piece is about President Carter's announcement on December 15 that the US on January 1 will recognize the Communist Chinese government in Peking, withdraw diplomatic recognition from the exile anti-Communist Chinese government on Taiwan, and continue to support "the people" of Taiwan without regarding their government as a legal and sovereign government.

First, a few personal opinions that differ from the

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editorial opinion expressed elsewhere in this journal. The decisions were right. They were inevitable in the sense that they arose from a policy established and announced by Richard Nixon and Henry Kissinger in 1972, affirmed by Gerald Ford and Kissinger in 1974-1976, and reaffirmed (as if they had originated the policy) by Carter and his chief staff adviser on foreign affairs, Zbigniew Brzezinski, in 1977. The time for useful criticism of the policy was before, on and immediately after February 27, 1972, when Nixon and Kissinger and their Peking counterparts, now dead, declared and defined it at the end of Nixon's unprecedented visit to mainland China. Their joint statement was instantly labeled "the Shanghai communiqué." The communiqué is often misrepresented. It did not explicitly commit the US to diplomatic recognition of the People's Republic of China (PRC in short) and to de-recognition of the late Chiang Kai-shek's Republic of China, (ROC). It on its face committed the US only to the gradual and "ultimate . . . withdrawal of all US forces and installations on Taiwan" and to "concrete consultations to further the normalization of relations" between the US and the PRC. "Normalization" was understood by responsible officials in the Nixon, Ford and Carter administrations to mean the diplomatic recognition of the Peking government and, practically though not necessarily in principle, the withdrawal of recognition from the Taiwan government. Much argument about whether it had to mean this and whether it should not or could not allow for "two Chinas"—the China of Peking and the China of Taipei, the capital of Taiwan—went on. In 30 years of following the debate, as a correspondent in Asia and as a correspondent and editor in New York and Washington, I've never known of any really serious argument about it within successive governments.

There has been and is serious debate about whether abrogation or termination of the 1954 mutual defense treaty between the US and the Taiwan government should or had to accompany de-recognition. The argument seldom took into account the same problems represented by some 60 other treaties and executive agreements between the US and Taiwan governments. It has been a most poorly informed argument.

Kissinger at the White House and at the State Department from 1972 to 1976 repeatedly asked both governmental and unofficial lawyers who were supposed to be expert in international law whether treaties and executive agreements between governments—in this instance the US and Taiwan governments—would continue to be valid if one government withdrew recognition from the other. I'm told that the unanimous, unqualified answer he got was "No." There is reason to suspect that Carter and his officials got the same answer from their lawyers before Carter announced that he was terminating the mutual defense treaty with the ROC with one year's notice, meaning at the end of calendar 1979. The Peking Chinese since 1972 had always insisted upon instant abrogation of the treaty instead of termination on a year's notice, as the treaty provides. Peking's assent to termination rather than immediate abrogation is billed as a US gain. Legalistic critics say the issue is fraudulent since de-recognition invalidates the defense and all other treaties and agreements. These critics overlook the political and psychological effects. Instant abrogation could have been a disaster for morale on Taiwan and for whatever remains of the US reputation for good faith with its allies. Carter's insistence that the PRC accept termination rather than immediate abrogation resulted in a genuine concession by the PRC and a genuine gain for the US. That being said, the sort of qualification embedded in so much of this complex affair must follow. The public and private official statements on the problem come to this. No responsible official has asserted at this writing that the US-ROC treaties and agreements continue to be legal and legally binding after de-recognition. The claim is that they will "continue in effect," if necessary by legislation authorizing their continuation as unofficial rather than government-to-government arrangements. What counts, the administration view finally reduces to, is not legality but US intent. If the US truly intends as Carter and his spokesmen say it does to keep the treaties, agreements and obligations—military, commercial, scientific, economic—in effect it will damn well do so and the Peking government understands that it will.

Now to some of the public and quasi-public official statements on which the foregoing analysis is based.

Carter and his senior foreign policy advisers, notably Brzezinski, usually give an impression that they discovered the current problems and opportunities in foreign policy. Not in this instance, though. Thus Carter announcing and at a press briefing justifying his decision: "It is something that I and my predecessors have sought avidly. . . . I obviously have to give a major part of the credit to President Nixon and to President Ford." Carter told Ford by telephone of his pending announcement a few hours before he made it. Brzezinski notified Nixon and Kissinger.

The US's longtime friend and the ROC's ambassador for many years in Washington, James Shen, was invited to come by the State Department an hour before the announcement was scheduled. Shen was out of town. He arranged to leave Washington for Taipei on December 29, without any further personal word or courtesy from Carter, Vance, Brzezinski or anybody else at the State Department and White House. Press Secretary Jody Powell was asked whether Carter would do Jimmy Shen the courtesy of seeing or phoning him before he departed. Powell never responded. Brutality and immorality are sometimes necessary in foreign affairs, as they were in this case. They were inherent in the 1972 Nixon-Kissinger policy decision. Kissinger

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and, yes, Richard Nixon would have implemented the policy with more consideration and courtesy than Carter and Brzezinski did.

The most insistent question thrown at Carter officials during a couple of White House background briefings, where by media consent the briefing officials could not be quoted by name, and at a public State Department press briefing, was, in effect, *Why now*? A second strategic arms agreement with the Soviet Union was supposed to be imminent and the long expected summit visit to the US by Leonid Brezhnev was all but scheduled for mid-January. So why screw up SALT with an announcement that was bound to aggravate the Soviet leadership? The proffered answers and the total Carter record on this point constitute the saddest commentary to date upon the President's and Brzezinski's basic judgment in matters of foreign relations and performance. An "administration official" said at a White House briefing following the President's televised announcement: "The reason it is done now is because the two parties came into agreement on the basis for doing it. . . . Once the agreement had been reached, we felt it was desirable to make it known . . . at the earliest possible time." Richard Holbrooke, the State Department's assistant secretary for East Asian affairs, said in part: "The first answer to 'Why now?' is, basically, that we felt there would never have been a better time. . . . On Taiwan we have a leadership which was looking for a new outward thrust to the rest of the world. . . . On Taiwan we have a prosperous, stable, secure people on the crest of economic prosperity and success . . . under a strong and confident leadership. And it was our assessment at this time, therefore, that this action at this time would have minimal, or minimizable, or manageable consequences."

At the most charitable the foregoing raises the question, "who is in charge?" One of Zbigniew Brzezinski's cardinal tenets is that in any matter involving the Soviet government we must always show that *we* are in charge—of timing, substance, US relationships with other powers that may concern Moscow. This decision very much concerned the Soviet leadership, to a degree and with effects that Carter and Brzezinski demonstrably failed to foresee.

During and after Brzezinski's visit to Peking last May—a visit that had more to do than was then admitted with starting the final process of normalization—his public statements were either juvenile and foolish or knowingly intended to irritate the Soviet government with suggestions that the US sides with Moscow's declared ideological and geopolitical enemy, the PRC. Brzezinski apologists, joining him in his characteristic hind-scenes attempt to maximize his role in the normalization process, say that privately in Peking he stroked the Chinese Communists and played up to their fears of the Soviet Union much less than Henry Kissinger did in 1971 and 1972. Brzezinski's apologists don't seem to comprehend the role that this version casts him in. Who did he think he was fooling—the Chinese, the American public or the Russians? I'd guess, the Chinese Communists and the American public, and not the Russians. He really seems to think that antics like shouting from the steps of the Great Wall, "Last one to the top fights the Russians in Ethiopia!" impress the Soviet leadership.

On December 19 Soviet Ambassador Anatoly Dobrynin delivered to Brzezinski a response from Brezhnev to Carter's China announcement. Brzezinski delivered the message to Carter. It is inconceivable that Brzezinski didn't study it and consult with the President about it before Carter disclosed it to Walter Cronkite of CBS in a nationally televised interview. Carter said to Cronkite: "Yes, I have had a personal message delivered to me this afternoon from President Brezhnev . . . acknowledging . . . that our new relationship with the People's Republic of China will contribute to world peace and acknowledging the fact that the proper relationship between major sovereign nations is to have full diplomatic relations. So I would characterize his personal message to me as being very positive in tone."

Tass, the official Soviet news agency, soon reported that Carter's statement had been inaccurate and had ignored Brezhnev's stern though politely stated qualification that the Soviet government would be watching the aftermath of normalization with great concern. Press Secretary Jody Powell said he'd read the Brezhnev message and that Carter's characterization of it was accurate. Accuracy was not the question. The folly of an American President, presumably with and on the advice of his senior staff foreign policy adviser, putting an avowed foe of the Peking government in such a position was incredible. As late as Thursday, December 21, Brzezinski was assuming that Brezhnev would be visiting Washington on or around January 15, two weeks before PRC Vice Premier Teng Hsiao-ping was to arrive, and that the sequence would constructively restrain Brezhnev, Teng and their American host, Jimmy Carter, from unseemly displays of pride or affection. Soviet Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko found excuses to suspend the SALT negotiations. Carter spokesmen canceled tentative arrangements to announce a SALT agreement and Brezhnev's visit. December of 1978, the month that was to have brought Carter a peace treaty between Israel and Egypt, SALT agreement and China normalization, neared an end with only the China announcement. A foreign affairs authority whom I respect and to whose past initiatives Carter owes more than he will ever concede predicted that by mid-March of 1979 Carter will have a Mideast treaty and a SALT agreement and that the China decisions will not have done anybody serious harm. I hope that my friend and authority is right on all counts.

John Osborne

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Why there's still no oil crisis.

OPEC's Price Reduction

OPEC has raised oil prices almost 15 percent, oil production has almost stopped in Iran, Shell Oil has announced a rationing scheme for unleaded gasoline—and yet the sky is not falling, and won't fall. It's becoming more difficult to convince people that there is an oil crisis. Perhaps they have finally figured out that even though prices for fuels are higher than they were before the four-fold price increase of 1973-74, this by itself does not constitute a crisis. As a matter of fact, the current value of gasoline at the pump is exactly equal to what it was in 1950—compared to all other commodities besides money. To fully appreciate this point, try measuring the price of gasoline in Hershey bars. Three of the new 25-cent bars that used to cost a nickel will buy the finest gallon of gasoline—with a little left over. The cost of energy, in other words, has barely kept up with inflation throughout the economy.

The price jump engineered by OPEC in 1973 and 1974 is still working its way through the world economy. It is depressing the demand for oil and encouraging conservation. In the United States, the response of industry has been very good. The trend toward smaller and more efficient cars will put a real dent into the consumption of oil over what it would have been otherwise. And the higher price is also bringing out more oil production from around the world. These things take time. Five years after the "oil crisis" began, drilling has finally started in the Atlantic offshore regions. Exploration has been speeded up in Mexico, with spectacular reports of huge oil discoveries. China finally seems to be getting into the act, and so will other countries. The full effect of the price increase may not be felt until about 1983, at which time the world production of oil should be causing one of the greatest oil gluts that we have ever seen. So much for the widely-heralded oil crisis of 1983, which was predicted by the CIA report in March 1977 and accepted as the cornerstone of the National Energy Plan.

OPEC price increases since 1974 have really been small adjustments which have not even kept pace with the rate of inflation. In real terms, the price of world oil has actually fallen by about 25 percent since 1974. This could be seen much more clearly if the price of oil was expressed in Swiss francs. The price increase of 14.5 percent therefore will be just an attempt to slow down a general price *decrease* which may persist for perhaps another five years. Even after 1983, the real price of oil will only rise very slowly, perhaps one to two percent a year.

People seem to have figured out also that a cutoff of oil cannot really do much to damage the United States. Short-term interruptions from accidents, strikes or sabotage can be handled by a stockpile of oil. Even if Saudi Arabia cut its production to zero—one of the worst imaginable scenarios—this simply would lead to a price increase on the world market, as the reduced supply adjusted to the demand for oil. Some calculations suggest a price increase of 50 percent. This looks big, until you realize that for the United States it would effectively be only 25 percent since we import now about half of our oil supply. This effective six to seven dollar increase per barrel, however, translates into an increase of only 15 cents per gallon. (One barrel is 42 gallons.) Now no one wants to pay more for fuel. But a 15-cent increase does not suggest a national crisis.

Another persistent myth is that oil imports are draining the US economy and are causing inflation. True, we are spending $45 billion a year for imported oil, and this certainly contributes to a negative trade balance. But the effect on the balance of *payments* is not so bad since most of the money comes back to the United States. The petro-dollars are used to buy American goods or they go into investments in the United States. In the first case they keep US workers busy, and in the second case they effectively finance part of the oil purchases. Consider the alternatives. If we were to insist on producing all of these fuels in the United States, we probably would have to spend much more money and resources in digging deeper and more expensive wells, or in building facilities to convert oil shale or coal into synthetic oil. Germany, Japan and Switzerland, importing nearly all of their oil, nevertheless have strong currencies. The main cause of inflation has to be looked for in another direction.

Well, if there's to be no oil crisis in 1983, what about the late 1980s or early 1990s as some studies now suggest? I'm afraid that those studies are using the same faulty economic reasoning. Somehow they all assume that the price of oil would be held fixed. In that case, of course, a crisis is inevitable. But if prices are permitted to move freely, then there cannot be an oil shortage, in 1983 or in 1988 or ever. The rising price not only reflects the increased scarcity of a resource, but also encourages conservation and new production throughout the world. Eventually the price must rise, because low-cost oil all over the world will become depleted. But higher-cost oil will be available for as far out as we can see, until its place is taken by some cheaper substitute, possibly coal or possibly nuclear or solar energy.

If we don't interfere too much with the natural processes of the market, then there will not be an oil crisis. But of course we can make one, if we really want to. The finest example is natural gas, where real shortages and real crises were produced by attempts to

Coming:

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hold the prices fixed at unrealistically low levels. Yet as soon as the new energy legislation of 1978 was signed, promising eventual deregulation and prices approximating production costs in the meantime, the crisis disappeared. Natural gas is becoming available again to people who have been waiting for years to heat their homes with gas.

The oil crisis is largely a media event. In recent days we have enjoyed once more reading the breathless utterances of oil sheikhs, the speculations of what a price increase will do to the world economy, to inflation, etc. To add to the enjoyment, reflect that this price increase is just a small adjustment that hides a decrease in the real price of oil, and that this decrease will continue for several more years in the face of inexorable market forces of world supply and world demand.

S. Fred Singer

S. Fred Singer is an economist at the University of Virginia specializing in energy matters.

How the Justice Department seduced and abandoned the Supreme Court.

Press Freedom's Tarnished Hero

by Nathan Lewin

With elaborate fanfare and fulsome self-praise, the Carter administration announced on December 13 that it plans to propose a law curbing the extraordinary power the Supreme Court has given police to rummage through newspaper offices. The White House's official announcement noted that the Supreme Court ruled on May 31, in a case called *Zurcher* v. *Stanford Daily*, that it was constitutional for the Palo Alto Police Department to descend, without advance notice, on the offices of the *Stanford Daily* and rummage through those offices, based on a search warrant for negatives, photographs and film of a demonstration that had turned into a brawl. The newspaper's staff was not suspected of breaking any law during the demonstration. The *Stanford Daily* protested that the constitutional rights of the press and privacy were violated when the police chose to ransack the newspaper's offices rather than courteously requesting the photos by use of a subpoena or some other less drastic means.

The "Background Report" issued by the White House on December 13 said that the Supreme Court's ruling "immediately raised concerns in the Carter administration and Congress about the potential threat to the time-honored freedom of the press" and that the issues presented by the case "were of great concern to the President, the Vice President, and the Attorney General." It declared sonorously: "The Carter Administration has concluded that the decision poses a serious threat to the ability of the press to gather information and to protect confidential sources." For this reason, the White House said, speedy remedial legislation was essential.

The White House's "Background Report" failed, however, to mention one critical fact—that back in January 1978 the Carter administration's Justice Department filed a friend-of-the-court brief in the *Zurcher* case urging the Supreme Court to adopt the very same constitutional principle that the president now viewed as "a serious threat to the ability of the press to gather information and to protect confidential sources." In reliance on the unqualified representations made in that brief—signed by Solicitor General Wade McCree and by Assistant Attorney General Benjamin Civiletti—the Supreme Court rejected the newspaper's assertions that freedom of the press would be endangered by a constitutional rule permitting searches of this kind. The Supreme Court might well feel it has been lead up the primrose path.

The *Stanford Daily* case arose when local police obtained a search warrant for the newspaper's offices. They were looking for photos to help identify participants in a demonstration at Stanford University Hospital. A highly respected federal district judge agreed with the newspaper's argument that the Constitution does not allow police to search the premises of someone not suspected of crime unless the searching authorities are first able to satisfy a judge or magistrate that less intrusive ways of getting the evidence are "impractical." The district judge, as well as the United States Court of Appeals which agreed with him, noted that the situation was particularly aggravated in the case of a newspaper. Such searches of

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newspaper offices threatened not only the right of privacy of innocent third parties, but also the rights of press and expression which a newspaper is in a unique position to assert. "Extra protections" are in order, the judge said, when first amendment rights are jeopardized.

The federal government was not a party to this litigation, and it did not ask to be heard. But after the Supreme Court agreed to review the case, it asked the solicitor general to submit a brief expressing the views of the United States. If permitting search warrants of this sort threatens "the time-honored freedom of the press"—as the Carter administration now says it does—this was the time for the Justice Department to speak up. Instead, it filed a brief which told the Supreme Court that the police and the district attorney were right, and that what the district judge and the court of appeals had done was an "ill-conceived departure from established Fourth Amendment principles."

The central question in the *Stanford Daily* case was really a very narrow one. Despite the recent uproar from journalists, it was settled long ago that law enforcement officials are entitled to relevant evidence in the hands of the fourth estate. There is no "journalist's privilege." The question is how they may obtain this evidence. If law enforcement authorities have reason to believe that documents or any other evidence of crime are in a particular place, they can legally obtain it by any of three different procedures. The least cumbersome—and the one that involves no formal legal action—is to request the person who has the evidence to produce it voluntarily. Obviously this method is undesirable if the police think that the material may be removed or destroyed. Since there is no legal duty to produce evidence in response to an informal request, the custodian may give it away or shred it once he is told that it is wanted.

A second method is to issue a subpoena for the evidence. Police do not ordinarily have the power to issue subpoenas on their own. In theory, district attorneys and prosecutors also have no such authority. Courts or agencies of courts—such as a grand jury—do have subpoena power. In practice, however, prosecutors sign and serve grand jury subpoenas without asking judges or grand jurors for authorization. Whenever evidence is needed as part of a criminal investigation within a grand jury's authority, a prosecutor is free to issue a subpoena bearing the imprint of the grand jury and directing a person to bring evidence to the grand jury. By established practice, evidence requested in this way need not actually be delivered to a grand jury session. Prosecutors customarily agree that if the evidence is brought to their offices it will be treated as if it had been delivered to the grand jury.

Service of a subpoena is a formal legal demand. If a person legally served with a subpoena has the evidence that is sought, that person may not give it to someone else or destroy it in order to avoid the subpoena. If a subject believes that a subpoena is illegal, that person may, before turning over any evidence, ask a court to "quash" it, and the court will decide whether the subpoena must be obeyed. If someone does not possess whatever the subpoena asks for, he or she need only say so (usually under oath) and be relieved of any further legal obligation.

The subpoena process depends pretty much on the honesty of whoever is served. If someone destroys documents that are requested and then says that they never existed, or that they were lost before the subpoena was received, it may be hard to prove that person a liar. Such deliberate avoidance of a subpoena is a crime, but the difficulties of establishing and proving the crime make it tempting to those who stand to gain if evidence disappears.

This is why police and prosecutors prefer the third method of securing evidence in the hands of someone they believe will be reluctant to produce it. The fourth amendment to the Constitution authorizes governmental searches of a specified location if the authorities establish, under oath, that there is "probable cause" to believe that specific evidence is located at a particularly described location. A judge or magistrate must decide whether the sworn evidence meets the test of "probable cause." If it does, the judge or magistrate issues a search warrant. The police then appear, without any prior warning, and have legal authority to rummage through the location until they find and seize the particular evidence described in the search warrant.

A search warrant is, of course, the least courteous of procedures. It gives the custodian of the evidence no warning and no chance to test, in advance, the legality of the search. The searchers can pore over many other things while they claim to be looking for the particular evidence that is the subject of the warrant. The person on whom the warrant is served is not permitted to make the initial judgment whether he or she has the described evidence. The searchers make that decision by going through the property and satisfying themselves.

Even before the *Stanford Daily* case there was no doubt that relevant evidence in the possession of a newspaper—such as photographs of a demonstration—could be obtained by police and prosecutors. The only issue in the case was whether the police are entitled to decide, entirely on the basis of their own judgment, that they would prefer to search rather than to serve a subpoena on the newspaper.

The *Stanford Daily* argued to the Supreme Court that there is much less risk that evidence might be destroyed or carried away if there is advance warning when it is in the hands of someone who is not suspected of having committed the offense being investigated. In dealing with suspects who possess evidence of their own

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crimes, the attorneys said, there might be good reason for police to proceed with a search rather than by subpoena. But no such reason exists when the evidence is in the hands of strangers who will not be affected by the investigation. With regard to such third party "nonsuspects," they argued, the constitutional rule should be that searches are permissible only if the police first prove to a judge that a subpoena is impractical. Such a rule is particularly important, they insisted, when the third party is a newspaper exercising free press rights under the first amendment, because the process of searching compromises a newspaper's offices in various ways. They insisted that a search disrupts a newspaper's operation for a substantial period of time and thereby impedes the flow of news to the public; that it presents a serious risk of disclosure of confidential sources in entirely unrelated matters; and that it impairs the independence of the newspaper and promotes self-censorship.

The White House's "Background Statement" of December 13 said that the Supreme Court's decision in the *Stanford Daily* case "immediately raised concerns" over the very same factors that the newspaper cited in its Supreme Court briefs—that is, "the possibility that confidential sources so valuable to the press would 'dry up,'" that the press "might be deterred from recording and preserving tapes or notes" and "the potential that press operations would be physically disrupted by searches or 'rummaging' by law enforcement officers." The White House said it also was concerned over "the possibility of increased use of press searches."

Yet the Justice Department's January 1978 brief pooh-poohed each of these fears. Echoing Justice Byron White's rejection of similar press claims in an earlier case, the Justice Department said that "the empirical likelihood of any or all of these occurrences is extremely difficult to predict." There is no need, the brief continued, for an across-the-board constitutional rule to avoid such consequences because judges and magistrates who pass on search warrant applications can take particular circumstances into account in each individual case. And as for the fear of "increased use of press searches," the Justice Department's brief said that the federal government had never, to its knowledge, searched "any media facility," and insisted this was unlikely to be a recurring problem even in state and local law enforcement.

The Supreme Court bought these arguments and relied upon them. It said that there had been "very few instances in the entire United States" of press searches, and that magistrates passing on search warrant applications are able to guard against extreme violations of a newspaper's first amendment rights. It also accepted the solicitor general's warnings that if subpoenas replaced searches as the means of securing evidence, there would be a serious hazard to criminal investigations. Speaking with the authority of the federal government's top criminal law enforcement agency, the brief told the Supreme Court that it was exceedingly difficult to draw a line between suspects and nonsuspects (particularly in the early stages of an investigation, when a search may be most necessary), that early notice to a nonsuspect who is related to or friendly with a suspect "would create an unjustifiable risk that valuable evidence would be lost" and that routine resort to grand jury subpoenas would create delays which are "incompatible with the imperatives of effective criminal investigation."

The Justice Department's legislative proposal of December 1978 casts to the wind the concerns so solemnly enumerated by the same Justice Department the previous January. The actual proposed statute has not yet been written, but according to the White House announcement and testimony before a Senate subcommittee by Philip Heymann, the present assistant attorney general in the Criminal Division, it will provide unqualified protection against governmental searches for any "work product" covered by the first amendment. The proposal includes, as "work product," any material created by or for a reporter, author, scholar or any other person who publishes his work for the public. Under the administration's bill, with two specific exceptions, a newspaper may never be searched to obtain notes, photographs, tapes, films, interview files or drafts of any matter designed to be published or otherwise disseminated to the public. This is an even broader protection than what the *Stanford Daily* wanted and the Justice Department previously opposed as too much of a burden on law enforcement. The *Stanford Daily*'s position before the Supreme Court was that a search should be allowed for unpublished photographs of a demonstration if the police could establish that a subpoena was impractical. The administration is now proposing that searches for such material be outlawed altogether, except where the person having the evidence "has committed or is committing the crime" or where the evidence is immediately needed "to prevent death or serious bodily injury to a human being."

What is the difference between a rule of law that a subpoena must be the *first* resort to secure evidence and one that says that a subpoena must be the *only* recourse? Under the first rule, a judge or magistrate may authorize a search if there is some risk that using a subpoena will result in disappearance of the evidence or if it is otherwise impractical. Under the second rule, even a magistrate has no power to authorize a search.

The Justice Department's selection of the more strict rule may signify a realistic recognition by federal authorities that there is a wide gulf between the theory of search warrant procedures and the reality. In theory, police who want to search a location must write down and swear to the reason they think such a search is needed, and must submit that evidence for judicious evaluation by what the courts call a "neutral and detached magistrate." The magistrate is supposed to

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decide whether there really is enough evidence to justify the great intrusion that accompanies a search.

In the real world this seldom happens. Most magistrates—particularly in local jurisdictions—think their job is to rubber-stamp the police's request as long as the form is correct. Since the proceeding is entirely one-sided—the person whose house is to be searched obviously is not told in advance, so there is no chance to challenge the warrant application—no one usually questions the police or prosecutor's conclusion that a search is needed. So a procedure authorizing a search warrant only if the police could satisfy a magistrate that a subpoena would not achieve the result probably would not provide much protection. Boilerplate language to this effect probably would become standard in search warrant applications.

This points up the most serious criticism that can be leveled at the Justice Department's friend-of-the-court brief in the *Stanford Daily* case. One may forgive the solicitor general the rhetorical excesses and the exaggerated warnings of harm to law enforcement that were repudiated—however implicitly and belatedly—with the legislative proposal announced last month. One may even forgive the unfortunate result the Justice Department foisted upon the Supreme Court—a result that would be barred under the administration's proposed legislation. But the most enduring harm that the Justice Department has done is to perpetuate a hopelessly unreal view of the warrant procedure. The brief argued that the magistrate who receives a search warrant application "remains free to impose any special restrictions on the manner of the warrant's execution" and that the magistrate "may shape and structure a warranted search in a way calculated to render the search reasonable." And the Supreme Court—which is far enough removed from real life to believe the Justice Department's description—based its decision on the wholly idealistic assumption that magistrates would use the "ample tools" at their disposal to "guard against searches . . . that would actually interfere with the timely publication of a newspaper." The Court's romantic view of magistrates who pass on warrant applications is shared by no lawyer who has actually seen the process. The Justice Department does the Court and the law a great disservice by repeating such a fiction.

First off the mark with a synthesis of the 1970s.

A Decade of Reaction

by Henry Fairlie

Perhaps the only surprise that will occur in the 12 months that are left of the 1970s is that President Carter will drop Vice President Mondale and run instead with Teng Hsiao-ping. What else of much novelty or interest can we expect? If Cleveland goes bankrupt, what would it signify? So the attempts to characterize the 1970s have started a year ahead of time, and we may as well get in near the beginning. An exhibition of "American Painting in the 1970s" has just opened in Buffalo, and will travel across the country. Paul Zweig recently described the poetry of the 1970s as that of "exhausted privacy." The labels are being given their practice run. Can we pin a label to the 1970s as a whole?

One common way of characterizing them is to say that, after the turmoil of the 1960s, the American people want to relax for a little: *not* to be at war, *not* to endure more confrontation, *not* to experiment for a while, *not* to be agitated about anything: just to enjoy, at least the white majority of them, being well enough off. Immediately this picture, on the surface so plausible, raises a question. If this is in fact the mood, why are people so disaffected? Why are they so uncertain of who they are, where they are or what they want? The question was asked, at the beginning of the 1970s, by Robert Lekachman in *Commentary*: "If we are so rich, why do we feel so poor?" He was asking it primarily in economic terms, but we can extend his question to the general dispiritedness of the times, and ask why we feel so poor in spirit. The problem with the Wattenberg-Scammon picture of a largely contented people is that, although the conditions of contentment are there, the people are nevertheless lost and dejected, with no real elan or inspiration even in their personal lives. A people that feels so poor, materially and spiritually, when in fact it is so well off, will be distracted and fretful. It is

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unlikely, in short, to be governable. The 1970s have brought us face to face with what it means in a free society to try to govern an ungovernable people. Even though thinkers and political philosophers and sociologists have been warning us for a long time, we are still surprised to find ourselves electing people to office, then giving them no authority to govern us.

There is no comparison with the 1950s. At least the newly comfortable majority in the 1950s enjoyed and believed in the worth of its prosperity and tranquility. Although not as rich as now, the people did not feel poor. On however banal a level of human aspiration, the newly affluent Americans were at home in their own country. After the Depression and the Second World War, it was good to be in this land of promise. What is more, Eisenhower also believed in it all, and personified it. He and the majority were one. The nation was governable, even without much exertion, because it wished to be governed. It believed that government was a good, and the bringer of good, because it believed that society had a place to go and things to accomplish. One of the true symbols of the 1950s was the Strategic Air Command—a prestige force that represented a national will within which the opposition still acted with as much sense of common purpose and identity as the majority. But what do the Americans in the 1970s want American to do?

Let us go back almost two decades to 1960, and see how remote a landscape it now seems. The main public figures in the West were still those who had been leaders in the Second World War: Eisenhower, Macmillan, de Gaulle, Adenauer, Ben Gurion. The best-sellers in fiction were Drury's *Advise and Consent*, Michener's *Hawaii* and Uris's *Exodus*: not much change there, I will grant you, as each still writes the same book, and it still sells. The nonfiction list included books such as Hart's *Act One*, Jarvis's *Folk Medicine*, Mattingly's *The Armada*, Packard's *The Status Seekers*, Strunk and White's *The Elements of Style* and Bryant's *Triumph in the West*—giving little hint of the self-actualization books so soon to come. There was a "Joy . . . " book on the list, but it was Bernstein's *The Joy of Music*. Major poetry was still being published, such as Auden's *Homage to Clio*, and innovative literary criticism could still take off, such as Fiedler's *Life and Death in the American Novel*. Even the bestseller lists and the most talked about books gave a strong sense of a continuing culture.

Although by 1969 *Miss Craig's 21-Day Shape-Up Program for Men and Women* suggested what was to come, the nonfiction bestseller lists were primarily concerned with social and not personal questions: Manchester's *The Arms of Krupp*, Bishop's *The Day Kennedy Was Shot*, Cleaver's *Soul on Ice*, Krock's *Sixty Years on the Firing Line* and Malraux's *Anti-Memoirs*. There was again a "Joy . . . " book but it was Rosten's *The Joys of Yiddish*. The fiction list was teetering on the brink with Roth's *Portnoy's Complaint*, of which he announced, "Right now *Portnoy's Complaint* is an event. In two years it will be a book." Ten years later, it is neither. We could still look forward to major poetry , such as Berryman's *His Toy, His Dream, His Rest*, although literary criticism as a form of wider cultural criticism had plunged out of sight. R.D. Laing, instead, was at his height, earning from *Time* the puff that he had "assured himself a place in intellectual history with his chilling thesis: that insanity may be no more than a reflection of an insane society." Ten years later he hardly holds a place in contemporary history. If we take *Time* as a weathervane, it had in a decade lost its poise. In its first issue of 1960 it had said that the most important event of 1960 would be choosing the President who would lead the US into the fabulous promise of the early sixties. The promise had in 10 years become a celebration of insanity.

In 1960 *Time* could say that "few women are commuters." The Archbishop of Canterbury could propose in his diocesan letter that adultery should be made a crime. And *Time* again could discover a new phenomenon: "Suburbia in the 1960s is the US's grassroots." Camus was killed in a sports car and, for its headline, *Paris-Presse* used the single word, "ABSURD." If it had occurred 10 years later his death would have been mythologized. The world of 1960 was still, barring accidents, one of fixtures. But by 1969, where to stand? With the first lunch counter sit-ins in North Carolina in 1960, the whole nation began to draw slowly together in support of civil rights. But by 1969 this impressive consensus was petering out in the radical chic of soul food, and in the far more serious falling out between the Jews and the blacks, which directly and indirectly led to Norman Podhoretz's suggestion in February 1972 that the question, "Is It Good for the Jews?" should be reestablished as a criterion to judge social policies. Lyndon Johnson already had in September 1965 ignited the time-bomb, when he prescribed affirmative action in employment by Executive Order No. 11246. But other fuses were burning. By May 1965 the Gallup Poll found that for the first time "crime" was regarded by a majority of Americans as the most important problem facing the nation." James Q. Wilson later said this marked "the clear emergence of the Social Issue" in American politics. Significantly it was in 1969 that hijacking became a problem serious enough for *Time* to write extensively about it. But what unifies these and other issues from 1960 to 1969 is that they were general social concerns.

Yet in 1968 Irving Howe picked out something else. He "glared sternly," as it was later put, "at those who wish to put aside the tragic burdens of the twentieth century" and enjoy instead a period of "relaxed pleasures and surface hedonism." His criticism of the "new sensibility," uttered when the social protest seemed to be at its height, has since become a commonplace: that it is shallow, escapist and nihilistic, feeding only "a psychology of unobstructed need." Psychoanalysis was going out of style, *Time* reported

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encouragingly in March 1969, but did not consider what worse was taking its place. *The Saturday Evening Post* ceased publication in 1969: at the end of the 1970s we know what we lost.

Standing at the end of the 1970s, our instinct is to ask why the apparently furious social protests of the 1960s led to the new sensibility, to the in-turning of the self. But our question is wrongly put. Much of the social protest of the 1960s was primarily that of personal theater, which only seemed to have a public concern because it took place on the streets. This was most obviously true of the Yippies, such as Jerry Rubin and Abbie Hoffman, but it was no less true of someone such as H. Bruce Franklin of Stanford who, as late as the early 1970s, was still being presented to us as a revolutionary martyr, although his "revolutionary Marxism" was, to all who heard him, the merest fig leaf for his self-indulgent theater. What could be seen only by some in the 1960s, but is now clear to all but a few, is that the new left was, from its beginning to its end, in a self-destructive alliance with the counterculture, and that the counterculture swallowed up the new left. If it had been seriously political at all, the new left would have fought the counterculture tooth and nail. It would have cut all connections with the hip and the junky. It would have had nothing to do with those who saw all society as the enemy of the individual, a posturizing that was soon extended to the belief that all *reality* is the enemy of the individual. When we listen today to Tom Hayden's account of his one-time associates—"Jerry Rubin continues his quest for a therapeutic revolution. . . . Abbie Hoffman has literally dropped out, since he's forced to live as a fugitive to avoid a long jail sentence on an old drug charge. . . . Rennie Davis has dropped political activism—and that to undertake a spiritual life . . . "—we are listening to a self-serving mythologizing of one of the great political betrayals of all time.

Let us turn elsewhere for illumination, as long as we understand that it is only illumination, and do not draw parallels that are unwarranted. Nothing in the 1970s has been more bitty than its art. "The 70s doesn't promise to be a major decade," Brian O'Doherty wrote in *Art in America* early in 1971. His prediction, in the event, was modest. Whatever one may in the end say of the abstract expressionism of the 1950s, it was a movement that still had the same sort of cohesion as movements of the past, still had some of the characteristics of an avant-garde (that old thing) in its relationship to the rest of society—and above all was not yet art about art, but with its very personal gesturing and improvising kept a more than tenuous relation with a reality beyond itself. When it faded at the end of the 1950s, it was replaced, for what seemed to be a period of some duration, by the hard-edged style, or whatever one wishes to call it, which was marked by all that abstract expressionism had avoided, and led the art critic of the *New York Herald Tribune* in 1960 to greet the work of Frank Stella as "unspeakably boring." Almost 20 years later, the art critic of *The Washington Post* has said in an assessment of 1978: "The Corcoran is now showing an exhibition of Gene Davis's stripes. He's been painting stripes since 1958." But not many can live by stripes alone—not even many artists can—and what then followed was one movement after another. Op and Pop, kinetic and light, funk and minimal, even the impossible. This was also the period when we celebrated great fields of color, as when a critic in *Art News* said of some Rothkos, "the massive walls of color seem to breathe in a whispered rhythm, that accords with the structure of the Paint." This was what may be called painting as calisthenics, as we all talked of how color breathes in and out.

Carl-André in 1967-68 exhibited his scatter piece, *Spill*, in which he removed 800 identical plastic blocks from a bag and threw them on the floor, Robert Morris was gamely slashing wall hangings and railroad packings and wire scraps, and the stage (which is the appropriate word) was set for the 1970s. One art magazine summed up the art scene (again an appropriate word): "Earthworks, Air-, Fire-, Water-, and Lightening-works, Bodyworks, Ready-made Environments, Bio-feedback Environments, Readymade Sound works, electronic Sound-Field pieces, Brainwave pieces, Information and Systems pieces, Computer and Conceptual Art, Happenings and Activities." With the arrival of conceptual art, that strongheaded critic, Grace Glueck, asked with what she must have intended as irony: "Will the next trend, for example—so talky and conceptual art has become—be Thought Art, conceived in the head, and never executed? And will earthworks ever really get off the ground?" She has had her answer in the rest of the 1970s. The new realism or lyrical abstraction of the early 1970s might have been expected to provide some counter, but they have turned out to be escapes and not paths out of the desert of post-modernism. "Is not the lyrical painterliness a way of ignoring the whole problem," Brian O'Doherty again asked in *Art in America*," by accepting an exquisitely marginal position in return for small satisfactions?" The answers have been only pretty.

Two years into the 1970s, Harold Rosenberg delivered his famous blast. "In contrast to the meagerness of art, the artist is blown up to gigantic proportions. . . . The artist has become, as it were, too big for art." Too big for art, yet so slight a figure. The figure of Warhol foretold it all. His wispy and even waifish form glides through two decades, with all the telltale characteristics that one critic once praised: the development and sustaining of a personal mythology of the artist as celebrity; the sedulous projection of a group lifestyle; the crossing from art into other forms such as the movies; and all the time expounding of a body of ideas, in place of an art that speaks for itself, "which themselves make a literary contribution." Is it

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any wonder that in the 1970s, as more than one critic has said, we have seemed to be looking backwards, and jump at the huge retrospectives of a Rauschenberg or an Albers or a Stella or a Frankenthaler or a Lichtenstein?

We are looking at our art here only as an illustration. But is not "an exquisitely marginal position in return for small satisfactions" also a pointedly accurate description of the more general mood of turning inward in the 1970s? Our public and private voices have been separated, and the private simper has excluded any public statement. Painterliness ought to be a term, if not a condemnation, at least of condescension. But does it not apply equally to the private lives we now celebrate? "Part of the current failure of confidence in art is surely due," Brian O'Doherty said yet again as the 1970s enfolded us, "to the failure of modernist art to perform any radical social function." O'Doherty was one of the first to perceive the new conservatism in art which every art critic now proclaims as a mark of the 1970s. If we do not draw any parallel too closely, is there not some connection with the wider conservatism of the 1970s? Nathan Glazer was able to ask early in the 1970s if it had not become "very nearly impossible for conservative, let alone reactionary, thinking to flourish in the colleges and universities. . . . And since the universities now provide almost all the intellectual leadership we have, there is precious little such leadership to be found for rightist constituencies. Thus there now exists no powerful force within the intellectual world to challenge the intellectuals of the Left." But now at the end of the 1970s it seems to be conservative intellectual leadership that is setting the pace. This conservatism did not come from nowhere. It has been building for a long time. Its force is a long way from being spent.

We are fortunate in having, at the end of the 1970s, a work of synthesizing, *The Last Half-Century* (University of Chicago Press) by a sociologist as perceptive as Morris Janowitz. Unfortunately he writes as a sociologist for sociologists—in none of the humane disciplines is it more urgent to have courses in English composition—and the rest of us have to gulp down what we find indigestible. But he addresses himself to the problem that the 1970s have faced but have not met: that of trying to govern a free people who in temper have become ungovernable. He avoids trumpery explanations like that of Samuel P. Huntington, for the Trilateral Commission, that the crisis of authority may in one simple sweep be blamed on democracy. He examines with great care many developments to which we will come in turn, such as the weakening of political participation by so many, and the growth of interest-group politics that is so obvious today. He is not tempted by the answers of the new conservatism. "The renewed appeals of the language of competitive economics may produce specific political and socioeconomic developments, but not supply the basis of a new political majority [one wishes that could be hammered home] and a new critical alignment." But one wishes that he had gone beyond the boundaries of his social and political analysis; that he had reached also to the realm of ideas and influences that are generated apart from the impact of social and economic and technological forces.

It is curious to write a book on the decline of authority—for that, broadly stated, is his theme—with no mention of religion, none of philosophy, hardly any of the arts and even less of literature, although these are where the self has been redefined. The claims of society have been persistently undermined in the past 200 years by a high culture that has stood increasingly and brazenly in opposition to it. This culture has not been responding only to economic and technological influences, because part of the problem is that it has declared its own autonomy, to such an extent now that the artist in turn has declared his autonomy from his art. If art has become a free-for-all, as has been said, so the self has become a free-for-all. Authority is now disdained, not because people do not wish it—there are abundant signs that, deprived of it legitimately, they seek it in tragic substitutes—but because they are incapable of accepting it, and their culture has made them so.

No intellectual task is more urgent at the end of the 1970s than distinguishing the idea of violence from the idea of force, the idea of force from that of power and the idea of power from that of authority. The purpose could be so that authority could be seen as a *sine qua non* of any individual's development. When one speaks of authority in the social or political world, it is not very different from speaking of someone as an authority on Shakespeare. Of course we are entitled just to read Shakespeare by ourselves, if we will, and imagine that we are getting from him the best that we can. But if that is all we do, his works will mean little to us. History is itself such an authority. The body of a nation's literature and art is such an authority. Learning is naturally such an authority. Age simply by being old is such an authority. But it is precisely these forms of authority that are now slighted. One can only wonder that the conservatism of the 1970s does not shudder in its boots at the forces to which it gives its respectability, by its appeals to competitive economics and less active government, releasing the individual to feckless lyrical and indeed painterly expressions of the self.

The 1970s has not been a decade of conservatism. There might have been something to be said for this. Rather it has been a Decade of Reaction, for which the preparation has been long and sedulous. We are being led by the conservative intellectuals, and they are leading themselves no less, into the garden of weeds and nettles that Ayn Rand helped to prepare for us. If that seems too vulgar, it must be said that one of the key conservative works of the 1970s, Robert Nozick's

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Anarchy, State and Utopia, is no less vulgar in a radical libertarianism, as we are asked to consider it, that is really nothing but a self-indulgent permissiveness—which any true conservative should resist by instinct—speciously given the dignity of a moral system. I mean by reaction the rejection of the long teaching and experience of our civilization that it is only by concern, care and compassion for others that we may survive and progress as individuals and as societies. The 1970s deserve to be called a Decade of Reaction because, behind the conservatism, lies an amorality in the individual's association with his society that reaches back to the primitive. The rip-off, at least an honest description of the new libertarianism, is not new. It is barbarism given the light of day in which to grow for the first time in many centuries. The people in the Wattenberg-Scammon picture of today's Americans reflect the society of the rip-off but oh! how unhappy they are and how desolate in this image of themselves and their land. And how ungovernable they have become no matter who is elected to be president. Yet it is presidents we blame.

To be continued.

An experiment in worker capitalism.

Youngstown Fights Back

by Robert Howard

Youngstown, Ohio

Youngstown is fond of the story of Kirwan's Canal. The canal was the brainchild of Youngstown's congressman for 34 years, Michael J. Kirwan. With a commitment that approached obsession, Kirwan wanted the Army Corps of Engineers to build a 100-mile navigable waterway from Lake Erie to the Ohio River via Youngstown, thus solving the transportation problems of the area's landlocked steel industry with one wave of the federal wand. As chairman of the House Public Works Committee, Kirwan almost saw his idea become reality. But the project proved impractical; costs were too high, local politicians too opposed. When Kirwan died in 1970, his grandiose dream died with him.

The death of Kirwan's Canal demonstrates the strong local skepticism toward "big ideas" and the traditional political personalities who tend to propose them. For in spite of these public figures, Youngstown's problems have only become worse. Studies rate Youngstown as the most economically depressed metropolitan area in the state of Ohio (where the competition is stiff). The local economy suffers from an extreme version of the general problems affecting the entire American steel industry. Youngstown is representative of urban areas throughout the northeast—a working-class city burdened with an outmoded industrial plant and victimized by the flight of badly needed capital to more profitable climates in the south and southwest.

But there is a new big idea afloat in Youngstown today. It does not come from any of the traditional leaders in the political life of this northeastern Ohio community and it has begun to break through the skepticism expressed by the story of Kirwan's Canal. During the past year a group of about 200 local religious leaders calling itself the Ecumenical Coalition of the Mahoning Valley has led a sustained community effort to combat economic decline. After the closing of a major steel mill in the Youngstown area, the Mahoning Ecumenical Coalition and its supporters—an unusual mixture of church groups, veterans of the new left and local activists in the steelworkers' union—have devised a plan for a community and worker-owned corporation to purchase the mill and its operation.

In September 1977, the Youngstown Sheet and Tube company announced the closing of major portions of its Campbell Works mill. Sheet and Tube had been a locally-owned company since its establishment in 1902, but in 1969 it was swallowed up by a sunbelt conglomerate, the Lykes Corporation from New Orleans. Lykes's occupation of Sheet and Tube is a history of neglect. Lykes put in only about one-fourth of the capital investment necessary to keep the plant from deteriorating, let alone attempting to modernize

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it. Sheet and Tube's substantial cash-flow was diverted to other Lykes projects. Finally Lykes decided to write off the Campbell Works. The first of 4200 workers were laid off days after the closing announcement. In the Youngstown suburb of Campbell, where most of the mill is located, 80 percent of the town's tax base disappeared from the books.

The layoffs shocked Youngstown. Industrial closings were not new to the Mahoning Valley; 10,000 jobs have been lost since 1950. But the size and suddenness of the Campbell layoffs caught everyone by surprise. Traditional business, labor and government circles were paralyzed. Local politicians could do little but point to the same villains that Lykes had cited to excuse the mill closing: foreign steel dumping, federal environmental regulations, etc. Leaders of the United Steelworkers were equally unhelpful. In a meeting in Washington with angry Youngstown steel workers, union president Lloyd McBride urged that the lost jobs be written off, that union locals work to preserve those that still remained.

The Ecumenical Coalition led by Roman Catholic Bishop James Malone, has tried to fill the institutional vacuum with a strange blend of old-time community capitalism and 1960s participatory democracy. Two months after the layoffs, the Coalition produced a manifesto entitled "A Religious Response to the Mahoning Valley Steel Crisis," arguing that large corporations must be accountable to the individuals they employ and the communities where they are located. The Coalition statement found ready supporters among certain officials of the affected United Steelworkers' locals. Caught between the anger and disillusion of their members and the apparent indifference of the international union leadership, these union activists were the first to suggest the idea of community ownership. The Coalition then contacted experts outside the immediate community whose legacy is largely that of the new left. Economist Gar Alperovitz, director of the Washington-based National Center for Economic Alternatives, proposed that the Youngstown people risk something big—a massive project to buy the Campbell Works and to run it through a corporation owned by the workers employed at the mill, members of the Youngstown community and a minority of outside investors.

Alperovitz's Center got $300,000 from the federal government for a feasibility study. It concluded that reopening the Campbell Works, "though difficult, is technically feasible." Necessary conditions included thorough modernization of the mill's aging equipment, an increase in productivity and an aggressive search for new markets. The estimated start-up cost: $535 million over eight years. Alperovitz recommended that the federal government help the community ownership experiment with a $15-million "Urban Action Development Grant" from HUD, $300 million in federal loan guarantees and the guarantee of a small piece of federal steel purchases.

Critics of the plan see it as the beginning of a permanent federal subsidy to part of the steel industry. Executives of United States Steel and Republic Steel, the two major competitors of a would-be community-owned mill in Youngstown, have condemned the proposal as "socialistic," even "communistic." Local business people express fear that big government would be invading the Mahoning Valley. William Sullivan, director of the Western Reserve Economic Development Association, a development group financed primarily by local industry, claims that the costs of modernization have been seriously underestimated and that the mill has been closed too long to retrieve its original markets.

Coalition supporters claim that the role of the federal government will be far less substantial than the feasibility study suggested. Alperovitz said, "the key issue is that of markets; it overwhelms all the subsidiary technical issues." The Center's report took a conservative stand on the potential markets available to a new steel company in Youngstown; thus the dependence on some federal procurement. But others are more optimistic. Bernt Rathaus, a steel industry consultant and former vice president of US Steel, claims that the outlook for a new small company is excellent because major steel buyers like to hedge against potential steel shortages by using a diversity of suppliers. Letters to Alperovitz's Center from the purchasing departments of American automobile manufacturers seem to confirm this judgment. Alperovitz now says guaranteed federal procurement may be unnecessary, and the only federal assistance the plant would need would be $150 to $200 million in loan guarantees.

Coalition leaders argue that their proposal is a challenge to the federal government to support a new way to confront urban problems. "Youngstown is in a situation where the other side has no answer," Alperovitz said. "We are convinced we can run the mill with a profit margin of 10 to 14 percent, but private industry wouldn't touch it unless profit approaches 18 to 22 percent. Alperovitz estimates that even doing nothing to help the Youngstown experiment would cost the public sector $60 to $70 million in tax losses and social service benefit payments during the first three years. So according to the Coalition, either the federal government can spend tax dollars on unemployment and welfare, or it can support a project that attempts to solve the central problem. "The value of the Coalition project is as a demonstration of new forms of economic organization," says Coalition lawyer Staughton Lynd. "It's not just another business. It ought to be viewed as a kind of TVA for the '70s—socially desirable for its own sake."

So far the Ecumenical Coalition's major victories have been political. With growing sophistication, it has

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established itself as the primary agent in any attempt to revitalize the Mahoning Valley steel industry. A year-long "Save Our Valley" organizing campaign begun shortly after the layoffs publicized Youngstown's economic problems and promoted the idea of community ownership. Local residents and unions, and church groups across the country, deposited more than four million dollars in symbolic, no-risk Save Our Valley accounts in Youngstown banks. Using its nationwide religious contacts, the Coalition had an effective national and local political network in place by the end of last summer. The public relations campaign has been so effective that those opposed to the community ownership project have found it impossible to openly criticize the religious group's work; "it's a little like coming out against apple pie and motherhood," in the words of one Youngstown business leader. Before the November election, the Ecumenical Coalition asked all Ohio candidates for public office to commit themselves for or against the community ownership plan. As a result, telegrams of support came in from all over the political spectrum. Governor James Rhodes, running hard against his liberal Democratic opponent Richard Celeste, promised to ask the state legislature for $10 million for the Youngstown project.

The real target of the Coalition's campaign has been the Carter administration. The tactic has been to appeal to the president's favorite theme of self-reliance. A full-page ad in *The Washington Post* signed by 2000 Ohio religious and community leaders announced "Mr. President, Youngstown's job crisis is a moral issue. . . . We need your help to keep self-help alive there and in the rest of Ohio."

So far the federal response has been contradictory, positive enough to suggest active interest, guarded enough to avoid any real commitment. The Youngstown project is caught in a struggle for control of federal urban policy between the Commerce Department and the Department of Housing and Urban Development. HUD officials have waxed eloquent over the project—"precisely the sort of local initiative we are looking for," HUD Secretary Patricia Harris said. An inter-agency task force under presidential aide Jack Watson is studying the proposal; it has already planned $100 million in loan guarantees to combat structural unemployment in the Mahoning Valley steel industry. But the Commerce Department, with its close ties to the business community, has opposed the plan. Also, Attorney General Griffin Bell's controversial approval of the proposed merger between Lykes and another conglomerate that owns Jones and Laughlin Steel Corporation would create a powerful new steel company that would increase the difficulties facing a new mill in the Youngstown area.

For the moment, the Carter administration is holding off from committing itself one way or the other. Another study, a more detailed examination of potential markets was commissioned in October and is just getting underway now.

The steelworkers of the Mahoning Valley face a crisis that is not only economic but also political and cultural. The economic changes symbolized by the Campbell layoffs threaten an entire way of life. That life was shaped by the growth of the American steel industry, the labor struggles of the 1930s, and the subsequent partnership of big business and big labor forged in the Second World War.

"Since I been two or three years old, I seen that mill," one Youngstown worker said. "Then all of a sudden, you see the place dead. I worked there for years, still go by every day. 'Course you're not allowed in there now; you're out. Living here all my life I see these things, just like sand castles washed away. And I can't understand why." The same thing happened to Appalachian miners of the 1950s. "We've got guys in the mill who were run out of West Virginia and Pennsylvania when the coal mines went bust," Ed Mann said. "And now it's happening here."

These men see clearly that their needs are not being met by conventional agencies of power . . . not by government, certainly not by business, not even by labor. They make up an available constituency: disoriented, angry, increasingly willing to move toward organizations that will meet those needs—or appear to do so.

The Ecumenical Coalition has recognized this—the inadequancies of the traditional forms of political description to solving new economic problems. It has fashioned a proposal that cuts across the conventional categories. As a result, it has gained the support of a growing portion of this available constituency.

As the political system attempts to respond to citizens' distress about the economic realities of the 1970s, a social movement has developed in a direction quite opposed to America's much touted "move to the right." The Youngstown experiment may be the harbinger of a progressive movement aimed at that very group conservatives have proclaimed to be the bedrock of the silent majority, the traditional white ethnic working class.

What was VAT Again?

Two lines were transposed in Stephen Chapman's article, "Anything but VAT," *TNR*, December 23 & 30, 1978. The first paragraph should have ended ". . . when the European Common Market required all member countries to implement a VAT to replace existing sales taxes. President Nixon proposed a VAT to replace the property tax as a source of revenue for public schools, but the idea never got a strong push and eventually was discarded." The third sentence of the second paragraph should have read: "The VAT applies to the 'value added' to goods and services at each stage of the production and sale process." We apologize for the error.

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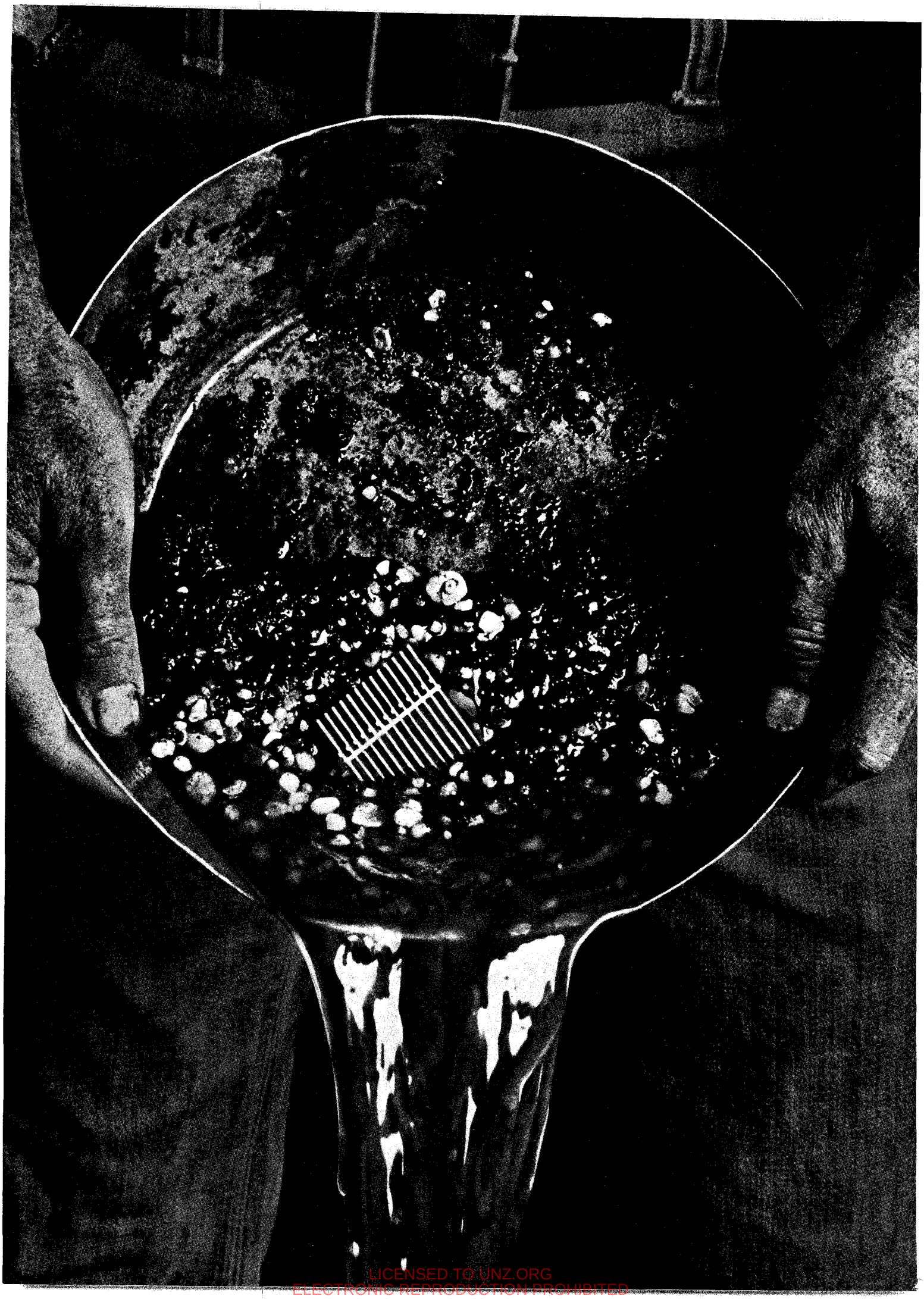

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It must be gold that's plated to the switching components you see glittering in the photograph, because no other metal can provide the same kind of efficient, reliable, durable, and clear telephone transmission.

But until now, gold-plating had always been a messy and imprecise process. There had been no way to control it accurately. No way to avoid depositing excess gold on the places it was intended to go. And on the places it wasn't.

So Western Electric, working with Bell Labs, designed a totally new system to do the job. Combining the best of electro-chemical and programmed logic control technologies, the new system can plate gold with hair-thin precision. Depositing only the desired amount, only on the designated spot. With no waste whatsoever.

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Besides producing a much better product, Western Electric has mined a savings of $9 million from the process. And that's another way we're helping your Bell Telephone Company hold down the cost of your phone service.

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And since the new process uses 55% less gold than the old one, we could more than double production of our improved switching component. Without consuming any more of the shiny natural resource.

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This improved gold-plating technique is another way Western Electric is working to hold down the cost, while continually raising the quality of your phone service.

Keeping your communications system the best in the world.

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Arts and Lives

Stanley Kauffmann on films

Plot and Unplot

Moment by Moment (Universal). Except for porno, this is the first film I've seen that centers on a star's penis. Literally. All through the picture we are teased (assuming that we care) into thinking that we are just about to see it. Oops, no—cut, just in time. And when he makes love, the woman gets right to it, sliding her hand down his belly and under his belt.

But that's the chief reason for the film's existence, that centrality. It wants to reverse, openly and completely, female sex exploitation. We've all seen innumerable films that were built on teasings about the bodies of female stars. We never really expected to see genitalia in them, but males did keep hoping that somebody might have made a slip, might have given us a glimpse of buttocks or breasts. Now the whirligig of time has brought in its revenges. *Moment by Moment* was written and directed by a woman. King Leer has become Queen Leer.

This is hardly a protest. After centuries of female striptease, how can there be any protest? I only note it as a social phenomenon—and I only wish there was more in the film that was noteworthy. The one other matter of importance about it is that John Travolta, the owner of the organ in question, shows once more that he is a screen personality of nice-and-easy power. The first shot of him, walking down a street in Hollywood, proves it. He moves more attractively than any screen male since Astaire. I don't for a moment contend that he is Astaire's equal as a dancer, only that he's the first male since Astaire to make walking look like dancing. Travolta's face, odd in that it's narrower above the nose than below it, is candidly engaging in a super-prole way. His eyes were made for color film: bright blue. And he's got the last knockout punch of a male sexy personality: he's engagingly boyish. As an actor, he hasn't yet made a false move in any of his three films. Here he plays a Los Angeles "street kid," a sincere con man who uses different lines but is not really a faker. He does his conning without turning us off. Quite the reverse.

The basis of the plot is that old reliable, an affair between a mature woman and a younger man. A relatively recent example is *Harold and Maude*, which carried the disparity to an extreme, but it was a veteran theme long before that. (In 1932 I saw Franchot Tone in a play called *A Thousand Summers* in which he was a youth enamored of the mature Jane Cowl.) In this version the older woman is Lily Tomlin, married and with a son off at school. Her husband has taken up with a younger woman; Tomlin splits with him and, feeling disconsolate, gets involved with Travolta. Most of the action takes place at her beach house.

The sad news is that Tomlin is very bad. She played a comparable but much shorter role in *Nashville* where she impressed with a quiet gravity under her knowledge of the silliness of her infatuation. Here, with the role stretched and attenuated, the gravity disappears into drone—her voice becomes deadly dull—and all her performing acuteness is blunted. I have to add, too, because this picture depends on erotic atmosphere, that her horsey face, large teeth and apparently locked jaw don't help to create feelings that might surmount the wretched script.

That script was written by Jane Wagner, who also directed. It's beneath criticism. Even if we grant that the phrase "meaningful relationship" is used by a victim of argot, the boy, the dialogue still doesn't get far enough from that level to make the cliché seem deliberate. Wagner has collaborated on Tomlin's theater presentations, which I haven't seen but which are said to be sharp. You couldn't prove it by this script. This is the first film Wagner has directed, and it's distinguished by such brilliancies as slow cross-fades à la 1935 and montage sequences of searches-in-the-city when the boy runs off.

In the circumstances one can assume that Tomlin and Wagner collaborated more than the credits admit, that this was a Tomlin-Wagner job to promote Tomlin. It does just the reverse. After *Nashville* and *The Late Show*, this picture makes her look much less gifted and, what's at least as bad, less discerning.

But it does confirm an idea about Travolta that I had before *Moment by Moment* came along. Why not a remake of *Pal Joey*, which has never really been made despite the Sinatra-Hayworth botch of 1957? Travolta and Shirley MacLaine, and no holds barred. He could do the heel in a way that made clear how he got away with it, and MacLaine, who has always had everything else the part needs, is now just the right age. Let's go, somebody. (Robert Stigwood, who produced this mess, how about making amends by doing *Pal Joey*?)

Rain and Shine (New Yorker). There's a small European film genre in which the story is of little consequence, in which the real protagonist is a culture. The earliest example I can think of is Georges Rouquier's *Farrebique* (1947) which is about a year in the life of a French farm family. Rouquier spent the year with

Films Worth Seeing

Autumn Sonata. The one film in this list recommended unreservedly. Ingrid Bergman and Liv Ullmann, as mother and daughter, directed by Ingmar Bergman. Superb.

The Deer Hunter. Male bonding, here and in Vietnam. Exceptional acting, good direction, but a slow and inorganic script.

Girlfriends. Some truth about a New York young woman today, in Claudia Weill's first feature, flawed but absorbing.

The Wiz. Reportedly cost $35 million. Allowing for Diana Ross, you might enjoy watching them spend it.

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them, filming life through the four seasons (some of it, he admitted, was re-enacted), and the picture was not about the events involved but the life itself. The best example of the genre that I know is the Czech film *Intimate Lighting* (*TNR*, January 17, 1970), not neo-realist like *Farrebique*, made with professional actors and directed by Ivan Passer before his exile. On the surface it's about the visit of a city musician to a conservatory classmate who lives in the country: but the subject is really Czech culture.

Now there's a pleasant addition to the genre, *Rain and Shine*, the first feature by the Hungarian director Ferenc András who has done previous work in television. The scene is a village near the great Lake Balaton. It all takes place on August 20th, a holiday that is a masterstroke of governmental synthesis—it's both St. Stephen's Day, the patron saint of Hungary, and Constitution Day, which celebrates the new Hungary. The home is that of a winemaker, his wife, his father, his two grown children. The immediate action of the film is the visit of his sister, who works in Budapest, and her boss, a bureaucrat of some weight, and the boss's wife and daughter, for a day in the country and some country food. At this level the film gives us a vivid sketchbook of characters, highlighting the tugs and countertugs of ego and ambition and prurience and possessiveness that (surprise!) persist under socialism; but its real purpose is, through these sketches and interplayings, to reveal the texture of one kind of Hungarian life—custom, cooking, clothing, change, courtesy and discourtesy. I can't comment on the accuracy of the rendition. (András collaborated on the script with two others.) I can only report, paradoxically, that it seemed so familiar to someone who knows nothing about it that I believed it all and enjoyed it all.

András has cast his picture perfectly. Every actor is not only right, he or she goes past rightness to epitome. The editing style is foreordained by the material—the interweaving of numerous strands—but it's managed without any heavy-breathing effort to juggle fairly. The color of the cinematography is a little hard and András uses close-ups rather liberally, sometimes with a conscious aim of anti-romance. It's as if he wanted to keep the film from being overly *gemütlich*—or whatever the word is in Hungarian.

It's hard to believe that András had never seen *Intimate Lighting*. Similarities: a visit from the city to the country with a sexy woman among the visitors; the old man who "sages" around; the local derelict (a drunkard here instead of Passer's village idiot); eating and drinking as rituals; the designedly inconclusive ending. András doesn't quite come up to Passer because the Czech film opens deeper wounds of poignancy, of life dribbling away. But *Rain and Shine* is itself like a good visit: the host is thoughtful, the company is congenial, the occasion familiar enough to be cozy yet new enough to be interesting.

Reconsideration

Karen Horney's Ironic Vision

Forty years ago, Karen Horney published a probing reexamination of some of the basic precepts of Freudian psychoanalysis. The issues she addressed, both in *New Ways in Psychoanalysis* and in her other major works, were not matters for the psychoanalyst alone. Her questioning of some of the key Freudian assumptions had relevance as well to a rather broad range of issues in American cultural life—both because an unexamined Freudianism is implicit in much of our general intellectual discourse, and because Freud himself reflected some of the dominant assumptions in the Western tradition, assumptions which in her own way Horney challenged.

Now this may seem like a heavy burden to place on the work of a thinker and therapist who has tended to be seen as an interesting, but nonetheless minor, figure. And, to be sure, there is a good deal in Horney's writings that does seem rather naive and simpleminded. The most unfortunate consequence of this feature of her work is not so much the limitations her simplifications introduce—though they are significant—but the way in which they enabled her to be categorized and dismissed, so that her more important ideas were not taken quite as seriously as they should have been.

Perhaps the most glaring of the difficulties with her approach was her tendency to lace her work with a syrup of gratuitous optimism—gratuitous both in the sense that it had no firm basis in observation or argument and in the sense that it was not called for by the logic of the rest of her work.

Horney's use of such terms as "self-realization" or the "inherent urge to grow" was consonant with the trends among the other "neo-Freudian" writers of the time, and seems best understood as a reaction to the equally groundless pessimism in much of Freud's writings. The problem with such terms is not that they are wrong—on what grounds could one ever decide that?—but that they are vacuous. Precisely *because* they cannot really be assessed, they amount to little more than sentimental slogans, useful perhaps for motivating patients, but debilitating to serious intellectual inquiry.

But Horney's vision, if examined in its entirety, is not really so sunny. Horney does not deny that men have been venal, destructive or callous. She differs from Freud not in her view of what men are capable of doing, but in her view of what the ultimate source of their behavior is. She rejects the simple conclusion that men have acted destructively because such behavior is the expression of something intrinsic and necessary, which must have its due one way or another. She chooses instead to search for an understanding of the conditions under which such impulses will arise. Although at times she makes rather simple environmentalist claims, her analysis suggests that those conditions are not wholly external but are in substantial part the result of our own actions, or put differently, a consequence of our *character*.

Thus in Horney's view we are not doomed by fate. Neither neurosis nor destructiveness is our inevitable destiny. But, as I shall try to explicate below, the choices we make are likely to be the wrong ones, and in pursuing their unfortunate consequences we are likely to affirm these bad choices even more strenuously as necessary and correct.

To understand why this should be the case, it is useful to begin with Horney's

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view of what are the strongest driving forces in human life. The actions and tendencies that Freud saw as peremptory by virtue of a biological imperative, Horney saw as an imperative of *anxiety*. "The observation underlying the conviction that certain drives are instinctual or elemental," says Horney, "is their seemingly irresistible strength, their enforcing themselves on the individual and driving him willy-nilly toward certain goals." But, she contends, it is not the search for satisfaction that makes these urges so compulsive, but the search for safety, for relief from the feeling of being alone and helpless in an arbitrary, hostile world.

If one pursues the question of just what the nature of the danger actually is, one discovers how much irony pervades Horney's view. For the anticipated dangers which we strive so hard to avoid are largely of our own making, and largely a result of precisely those defensive efforts which we think are necessary for our security. Were we not so rigidly engaged in striving for safety, our sense of safety would be much greater, and the need for the defensive efforts much less. We are stretched upon a wheel of our own making, a psychic perpetual motion machine which revolves cycle after cycle. We groan but faithfully keep it going.

Take, for example, the kind of person who in the Freudian view might be said to exhibit strong reaction-formations against rage and destructive urges. Such a person's overt behavior appears excessively nice, or meek, or cooperative, or self-debasing; yet his dreams, slips of the tongue, and inadvertent actions all suggest that behind his adherence (or over-adherence) to social forms lie impulses that are decidedly *anti*-social. Traditionally, the rage is seen as deeper and earlier, deriving from instinctual sources and from the distant past. Horney would have us look elsewhere for its source; the way this person lives his life, she points out, is almost guaranteed to *continuously* generate rage, even as it continues to require that he find the rage unacceptable. For over and over again this kind of person creates circumstances in which his own desires are overridden, his own interests sacrificed, his efforts at self-expansion and even clear self-definition checked and pinched—and this not out of a meaningful expression of loving feelings but out of blind fear of offending, provoking, threatening, or losing those on whom he depends. Thus, the impulses he defends against—whatever their original source—are at this point the ironic product of the very defenses against them. Impulse leads to defense; defense leads to further stirring of impulse; and the person's life is an endless closed circle. Horney points in similar fashion to a variety of other ways of seeking security that tend ultimately to leave the person feeling less secure. The examination of how these self-protective efforts undermine themselves is at the heart of Horney's approach.

Karen Horney Photo courtesy of G. Lederer-Eckardt

Reinhold Niebuhr has suggested that an ironic situation "is distinguished from a pathetic one by the fact that a person involved in it bears some responsibility for it. It is distinguished from a tragic one by the fact that the responsibility is not due to a conscious choice but to an unconscious weakness." The irony in Horney's view of the human dilemma is further compounded by her insistence that the weakness too is not intrinsic but is itself a function of unconscious choices.

Horney, like Freud, traces the origin of neurotic conflict back to early childhood. But for her, the critical feature of the early years is the child's helplessness and dependency on others, as well as his inability to comprehend what makes his parents so loving and available some times and irritable or withdrawn at others—so that the world often seems, even for the child with the best upbringing, frightening and capricious. This insecurity promotes patterns of defensive behavior which will restrict the growth of the personality and interfere with the more realistic efforts to achieve security that are also developing.

Freud, of course, also regarded early helplessness, dependency, and cognitive immaturity as critical factors in determining our fate, though he stressed more frequently the strength of instinctual urges which he felt must inevitably clash with the socializing, civilizing influence of parents. But his view of the way the experiences of early childhood color our adult lives differed from Horney's in a way that has important implications for understanding our responsibility for our lives and for any consideration of improving our condition, either as individuals or as a society.

For Freud, certain aspects of early development were crucial and determinative because, as a result of their being repressed, they were rendered impervious to modification by later experience. Only the ego was responsive to external reality; that which was id was unchanging, making the same blind demands upon us in spite of whatever real constraints we might perceive or consider. Repression, in Freud's view, creates a fateful psychic disunity, a splitting between ego and id that prevents any psychic process in the latter category from partaking of the organizing, synthesizing, reality-testing activities of the former. Thus, that which is repressed early in life is preserved in its original form, like a woolly mammoth frozen in the arctic ice, the only difference being that the primeval denizens of the psyche continue to trumpet loudly and trample upon the prerogatives of the rational ego.

Horney's perspective, on the other hand, suggests that if we look closely we can see that in fact we remain childlike not *in spite of* what is going on today but precisely *because of* how we are presently leading our lives. The past is not something preserved and anachronistically imposing its influence upon the present; it is the starting point for a process that continues to generate consequences today.

The implications of this alternative view of how unconscious conflicts persist are illustrated in interesting fashion by considering Philip Roth's Alexander Portnoy. Portnoy is the quintessential post-Freudian man. Like so many contemporary intellectuals, he is trapped in a Freudian world-view. His conviction that the familial past is determinative has reduced him to a highly articulate form of impotent whining. However much we may empathize with his plight, we cannot, so long as we accept his grounding assump-

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tions, help him find a solution. What he fails to see, immersed as he is in a particular outlook, is how the early experiences he points to have led him to establish a way of life that—at this point—account for his dilemma far more substantively than does anything that happened in the past. It is in taking steps to change his current way of living that a resolution of his dilemma lies.

Freud cannot, of course, be held responsible for all the ways in which his ideas have been used (nor, certainly, did Roth intend to imply that Portnoy's complaint would leave Freud with no response). But the particular abuse of the Freudian perspective that Portnoy offers us to justify—and immobilize—himself is both widespread in our culture and not without some foundation in Freud's actual (admittedly far more complex) views. It illustrates well why a close second look at what Horney has had to say could be useful.

So too does the state of affairs in the field that has come to be known as psychohistory. Despite the valuable model provided by Erik Erikson (whose approach is, I would contend, closer to Horney's than to Freud's in many respects), the trend in psychohistorical writing has been reductionist and often verging on self-caricature. The fault, I think, lies not in the concept of psychohistory per se (as some critics have argued, but in the theoretical perspective that has informed most of this work.

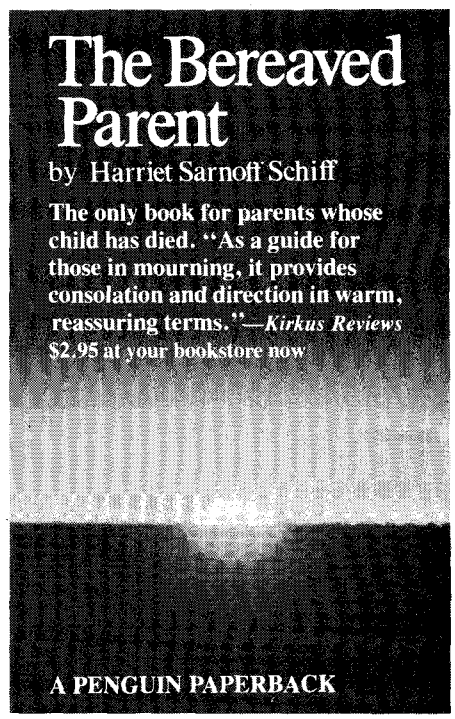
The model that has been adapted by the psychohistorians has tended to be the "woolly mammoth" model, in which early experiences are viewed as lodged unchanging in the psyche, and causation is almost exclusively from inside out, with external reality serving only to trigger the reactions which are lying in wait. One gets little sense in most psychohistorical writing of the continuing and reciprocal influences described by Horney and by other neo-Freudian writers such as Harry Stack Sullivan.

Much psychohistory is all psyche. The history is merely the playing out of a drama whose climax was already written when the future historical figure was only four years old. Indeed, one sometimes gets the impression that Hitler's, or Nixon's, or Carter's, or whoever's *mothers* were the real historical figures, with the famous offspring merely an incidental link in the causal chain. Now this of course is *poor* Freudianism—but it is also common and rooted in certain features which really are part of the Freudian approach. The perspective of Horney and the other neo-Freudians lends itself far more readily to an assessment of the responsibility the historical figure under study has for the maintenance of the patterns which characterize his or her life. Moreover, it points us to the particular actions chosen by the historical figure; the particular associates selected as advisers and confidantes, the particular kinds of relationships established with those advisers, and the particular side of the advisers that the historical figure brings out—how these choices and actions are essential if the pattern established in childhood is to be maintained. And it therefore also enables us to examine both how the earlier pattern *has* been changed by new circumstances and how it genuinely might have been, had different historical circumstances been encountered (on both a personal and a national or international level). Rather than describing historic personalities as in lockstep with an old marching song, this approach points us to where personality and history really meet, and gives each its due.

Karen Horney was not blessed with the brilliant followers who helped keep the Freudian tradition vital even after Freud's death. Though I think that her revisions represented the most useful direction for psychoanalytic theorizing to take and that contemporary Freudianism continues to reflect some of the same difficulties Horney highlighted 40 years ago, the orthodox Freudian tradition continues to attract the best minds in psychoanalysis. Apart from her contributions to feminist theory—the one area where Horney's work has received the attention it deserves—her ideas are not now at the center of intellectual discourse.

To some extent the lack of first-rate followers may have been due to the interpersonal difficulties that also caused her to sever her relations with other like-minded theorists shortly after her split with the Freudian establishment. In addition, she undermined the impact of her own ideas by retreating in her later years from her emphasis on social and interpersonal factors to a renewed emphasis on intrapsychic considerations. This turn in her theorizing was partly spurred by her increasing interest in the role played in neurosis and human suffering by false idealized images of the self, and she made some important contributions in this regard. But the overall effect of this change in emphasis was a debilitating one. As applied to theory, it led to the substanceless emphasis on "self-realization" discussed earlier. At the level of therapeutic practice, her reliance on spontaneous growth once the blinders of self-deception were removed prevented her from developing the more active and directive approach which her keenest insights seemed to suggest. There became little to distinguish her approach from the Freudian one here. Elsewhere I have spelled out in some detail why I think that the most important insights of Horney and the other neo-Freudians suggested that every neurosis required "accomplices"—in the sense that feedback from others is crucial to the maintenance of any recurrent pattern of behavior—and why this suggested a far more active and varied role for the therapist than the purely analytic one for which Horney opted. In a sense it can be said that the brilliant followers of Horney and other neo-Freudians do exist—in the ranks of the family therapy movement, where far more intellectual vitality and creativity can be found than among the official followers of Horney or the other neo-Freudians.

The decline of the neo-Freudians as an explicit intellectual force was further related to a larger, extremely significant issue. The most interesting and distinctive of their ideas were ultimately dissolved—either in their own work or that of their followers—in a watered down Freudianism, in which conceptions of an autonomous self, developing according to its own inner laws, replaced the more contextual descriptions of the


The Bereaved Parent
by Harriet Sarnoff Schiff
The only book for parents whose child has died. "As a guide for those in mourning, it provides consolation and direction in warm, reassuring terms."—Kirkus Reviews
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earlier years. More accurately, they succumbed not so much to Freudianism per se as to our culture's pervasive individualism, which both they *and* Freud shared. In psychotherapy, as in the society at large, this individualism has both positive and negative features. It is valuable in that it leads to a respect for the patient's values and a hesitancy for the therapist to impose his own (and, on a social level, to such concerns as the protection of civil liberties). But it can also lead to an excessive emphasis on each person's responsibility for his own fate, which makes the therapist hesitant to extend explicit help and which, on a social level, leads to the help-is-crippling rationalizations of the Nixon welfare ethic and the destructive view that we sould all go it alone, without feeling responsible for each other.

The reconciliation of these two features of individualism—the question of how to guarantee freedom while fostering cooperation and mutual assistance, of how to avoid the twin dangers of Sovietism and Nixonism—is perhaps the most crucial task facing us today. In confronting this dilemma, an examination of the work of Karen Horney—both of her still untapped insights and of her failures—has much to offer us.

Paul L. Wachtel

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Books Considered

Karl Marx: An Intimate Biography by Saul K. Padover

(McGraw-Hill; $18.95)

Back in the 1960s, when radical politics was in the air and even revolution seemed possible to some, there was talk that a filmmaker was at work on Marx's life. No film appeared, perhaps for the reason that was always given when the subject came up: too dull, too many hours in the British Museum. Yet Marx was not a dull man, as many who met him testified. Listen to one of the first Russians to sense his ambivalent fascination:

> *With a thick black mane on his head, hands covered with hair, his coat buttoned up crooked, he had the bearing of a man who had the right and the power to command respect, however strange his appearance and doctrines might seem. His movements were angular, yet sharp and self-assured. His manners were in opposition to all regular social forms. Yet they were proud, with a trace of contempt, and his piercing voice that rang like metal harmonized remarkably with his radical judgments on men and things. He spoke only in imperatives that tolerated no opposition, and which were sharpened by the tone that characterized everything he said, and which affected me almost painfully.*

Whom to imagine in this part: Alan Bates? Peter Ustinov? Dustin Hoffman? The role would not lack for exciting scenes. An active revolutionary in 1848, Marx was also in close touch with the events of the Paris Commune during 1871. His private life was sometimes dramatic too—a romantic marriage with a beautiful woman, entered into against the narrow-minded opposition of relatives on both sides, life in the great European capitals (Berlin, Paris, Brussels, London), years of painful struggle and deep sadness, an illegitimate child, a fight against illness—and through it all great courage and determination.

But a movie about Marx would have to overcome other difficulties. What attitude ought the filmmaker take to him? To portray Marx as a hero would appeal to his admirers, but even if the outcry from his detractors had a good effect at the box office, it would be hard to carry off. He was a hard character, as he said himself, capable of being unsympathetic, exploitative, and just downright nasty. Marx as a villain might have seemed a fitting theme in Cold War days, but surely later audiences would find it boring and out of date. What about the nagging questions of Marx scholarship? Did he genuinely like and understand workers, or were they pawns in the game of Hegelian dialectics? Or was Marx actually a democrat, his teaching distorted by Bolshevik conspirators? Can the history of his time be discreetly relegated to the background, or does one really have to understand it to make sense of Marx's career? And of course what to do about the thing that makes Marx most memorable—and least accessible—his thought? Freud's dreams may lend themselves to cinematic illustration—but *Das Kapital?*

Saul K. Padover's new biography of Marx seems to arise out of the kind of interest in his life that might inspire a film about him, but it also runs into some of the difficulties that filmmakers have escaped by leaving Marx to others. Padover sets out to focus not on the thinker but on the man, the towering figure who, even with all his faults, stands as "one of the great men of our epoch." Patiently researched (although by no means free of errors) and massive in scope, the book traces the course of Marx's life along its major routes and into many little-known paths and byways. Padover knows Marx's writings, having translated many of them into English, and he quotes from them liberally. He is, moreover, a devotee of the unexpected detail, giving us such minutiae as the grades on Marx's Gymnasium graduation exercises, the Latin titles of all the books he read for his dissertation, and a chemical analysis of the water he took at the health spa of Carlsbad.

What does all this tell us about Marx's life? Quite a lot if one thinks that a life is made up of a string of scenes—happenings, actions, pronouncements—leading from birth to death, all coming together to form an individual rather in the way beads make a bracelet. Much less if one thinks that a biographer's task is to discover the organic unity that makes a subject's history a real human life, and in the case of a great thinker, to describe the interaction between his thought and his experience. Padover does not ignore Marx's writings (how could he?) but he deals with them offhandedly, usually through the

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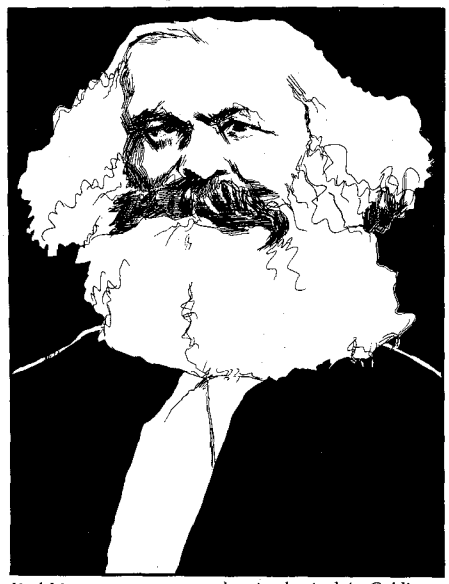
medium of quotations, but without the attention to text and context that clarifies and enlivens complex ideas. The development of Marx's thought, its major turning points, its persisting structures—these are not explored. The content of the difficult works—the Paris Manuscripts, the *Grundrisse*, *Capital*,—is alluded to, but it is never clearly set forth.

These disappointments in a learned and well-intentioned book all flow out of the basic equivocation that lies behind it: the mistaken belief that Marx's life and significance can be comprehended through a commonsense narrative; that an "intimate" portrait of him is one that fills the canvas with as many details as it can hold, but without involving the viewer in the challenging complexities of psychology or philosophy. Padover pays tribute to modern scholars who have expanded our knowledge of Marx (although his reference to the French Marxologist Auguste Cornu as August Comte does not inspire confidence in his reading), but his vision of scholarship involves mostly the collection of data, not the search for meaning and connections.

The point deserves specific illustration: the question of Marx's anti-Semitism is a good example of what is at issue. As is well known, Marx wrote an essay "On the Jewish Question," that presented an offensive and vicious portrait of the Jews. In it Marx described the foundation of Judaism as practical need and self-interest, and its worldly god as money. Society, he said, produces the Jew "out of its own entrails." Padover quotes from the essay and refers to some of Marx's letters that included anti-Semitic epithets. He concludes that Marx had a lifelong hostility to Jews and contributed to a tradition of anti-Semitism peculiarly associated with modern socialism. Only once, in a newspaper article of 1854, did Marx speak of Jews without derision. These conclusions seem to fit the obvious facts. But those facts turn out to be somewhat less clear-cut once one looks beneath the surface.

To begin with, Padover is wrong that Marx never returned to the Jewish question after his essay appeared early in 1844. Marx had written the essay in criticism of a pair of articles on the same subject by his colleague on the Hegelian left, Bruno Bauer. Bauer replied to a number of Jewish critics of his viewpoint—including Marx—later in 1844, and early in the following year, in *The Holy Family*, Marx published another reply to Bauer. In it he accepted Bauer's relegation of Marx himself to a category called "the Mass," including Jews, workers, and all those who could not rise to Bauer's own "spiritual" point of view. And he sided with some relatively obscure Jewish writers who had insisted, against Bauer, that the Jews were an historically significant people who had made a definite contribution to human development.



Karl Marx drawing by András Goldinger

This may seem contradictory at best in light of the commonsense reading of Marx's "On the Jewish Question" provided by Padover. But there are things Padover does not tell us. One is that Marx's hostile and ugly description of the Jews appeared in a surprising context: an argument in favor of Jewish civic rights. Marx had been associated with the advocacy of political emancipation for German Jews, as editor of a newspaper that supported the cause, the *Rheinische Zeitung*, and in one of his own articles he specifically argued against making civil or political rights dependent on religious identity. One of the major purposes of "On the Jewish Question" was to counter Bauer's contention that Jews had no right to demand political equality in a Christian state. They had as much claim as anyone both to citizenship and to "the rights of man," Marx insisted. Why then did he say the offensive things he did?

To answer that requires a closer look at just what Marx did and did not say. None of Marx's anti-Jewish ideas were original to him. Most were present in Bauer's essay, others could be found in Ludwig Feuerbach, under whose influence Marx was struggling at the time, and in many other German writers as well. But there was a difference between Marx's use of these ideas and, say, Bauer's. Bauer's anti-Semitism was comparative: it described Jews as inferior to Christians and provided support for policies that treated them that way. Such was the anti-Semitism of Marx's environment. By contrast, Marx's anti-Semitism did not compare the Jews to any other group. No portion of modern society was superior to them, and therefore no one had the right to dominate, persecute, or exclude them. What were commonly held to be the characteristic vices of Jews were defects suffused throughout modern life: egotism, self-interest, and the reduction of all human interaction to commodity relationships.

Viewed from this angle, Judaism took on positive significance from its most negative features. The positive significance was conceived in Marx's peculiar terms, the terms of an atheist and a revolutionary, and it will not mean to others what it meant to him. But we cannot understand him without recognizing it. In the second of Bauer's two essays, Marx's opponent had asked the question: which emancipates more, the negation of Christianity or the negation of Judaism? (That modern life required the negation of religion is an assumption many young radicals have shared.) To Bauer the answer was Christianity, since in passing through it one achieved a higher, more universal and spiritual perspective. To Marx the answer was just as clearly Judaism, because it was emancipation from bargaining and money that would liberate men in the present. Jews therefore possessed a greater potential for liberation than Christians did. A "Jewish" viewpoint was precisely the one from which liberation had to begin. This paradoxical claim was the framework for all of Marx's anti-Jewish remarks. Set in this context, his offensive declamations were part of a strange and perverse but nonetheless insistent affirmation of his own identity as a Jew. In his first evocation of the historical role assigned to the proletariat, written immediately after the essay on the Jewish question, Marx described workers too as living wholly in the realm of "practical need" and attributed their condition to society's increasing domination by economic interest. Marx was a revolutionary, and the "Jewish" quality of modern society, like the suffering of the proletariat, was welcome inasmuch as it defined the need for revolution.

However offensive we find Marx's anti-Semitic growlings, if we want to

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understand him we must take them in their own light. They did not belong to a tradition designed to subordinate Jews to other groups, but were directed squarely against that tradition. Marx never had the slightest sympathy for the political anti-Semitism of a pre-Nazi type that began to surface in the last years of his life (nor did Engels, who often joined and even incited Marx in his private anti-Jewish remarks) and, as Padover notes, he specifically ridiculed the racist theories of Gobineau in the 1860s. The main point of "On the Jewish Question" was not about Jews. It was (to put it simply) that the extension of political rights to excluded groups was a secondary issue compared with the necessity for a fundamental social transformation.

Hegel pointed out that common sense is a limited form of understanding because it believes that the real dimensions of things are the ones they seem to have in the light of a restricted range of experience. To attempt to write the life of a great and complex thinker from a perspective that makes his thought a secondary interest, never bothering to probe the surface it presents to readers much removed from it in time and in cultural preparation, is to illustrate just the defect of common sense that Hegel had in mind. One day someone may make a satisfying film about Marx's life. But it will not be achieved by way of the pseudo-intimacy that claims close acquaintance with an uncommon and distant personality without first learning to know what constitutes the special content of his world.

Jerrold Seigel

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Faggots
by Larry Kramer

(Random House; $10.95)

Kings Don't Mean a Thing
by Arthur Bell

(William Morrow; $8.95)

Ladies' Man
by Richard Price

(Houghton Mifflin; $8.95)

It's popularly referred to as the "underside"—those aspects of sexual behavior, places of assignation, realms of the imagination that fall decisively outside the boundaries of official morality. The underside is easily inhabited in America; a narrow set of norms was early codified here, buttressed ever since by earnest legions of the upright. Yet a gap has always existed between prescribed virtue and actual behavior. Even at the height of the Victorian period, as the historian Carl Degler has recently argued, there may have been considerable incongruence between the moralists' words and the citizens' deeds.

What may be special to the last dozen years is that the "counter morality" (moralities?) is markedly more visible, assertive and unapologetic than ever before. Indeed, if media coverage is any index, yesterday's underside is rapidly becoming today's topsoil—with arguable enrichments in both happiness and confusion. Articles issue from our magazines about "Bondage as the Last Frontier" and "House Pets as Lovers." Confessions and exposés, variously contrite and contentious, issue from our sanctums of power: page boys doing double duty in Congress; black-gartered dominatrix sowing discord among international diplomats; specially reared Great Danes and specially staged crucifixions vying for the attention of jaded jetset luminaries. Rumor even has it that the scholarly journals will soon be getting in on the act, with articles in preparation on "The Acheron Theme in the Novels of John Rechy" and "Satanic Envy: The Dracula Revival and Contemporary Hermeneutics."

Book publishers have been a bit slow in picking up on the new themes—doubtless because their corporate owners are leery about disturbing their image for public piety. Yet suddenly within one month, three books have appeared which together seem to mark an irrevocable breach toward the future. Larry Kramer's novel, *Faggots*, focuses on the farther shores of gay hedonism: bathhouse orgies, drugged-out discos, Fire Island "meat racks." Arthur Bell's *Kings Don't Mean a Thing* recounts the 1975 murder of John Knight III (heir to the Knight-Ridder newspaper empire) and the subsequent revelations about his double-life involvement with (mostly male) pimps, pushers and hustlers. Richard Price's novel, *Ladies' Man*, traces the odyssey of a young salesman, following a breakup with his girlfriend, through Manhattan's fringe—some would say, central—world of live sex shows, porno shops, singles' bars and, ultimately (gay is always ultimate in the fevered national consciousness) the backroom sex bars of Greenwich Village.

The three books vary widely in literary talent and sociological interest. One of them, Kramer's *Faggots*, is devoid of either. It is a foolish, even stupid book. And not because, as some will argue, it has tried to be an exact transcription of that fatuous segment of the gay male population which defines existence wholly in terms of gyms, discos, orgies and Fire Island phantasmagoria. No, the book fails because it has nothing of discernment to say about that scene nor, in place of insight, any compensating literary distinction. Announced as a searing indictment of the giddy Fire Island set, *Faggots* merely exemplifies it. And often cannot manage that. The book's wooden dialogue, strained humor and smug disdain are no match for the inventive flamboyance of Fire Island hedonism when viewed from an angle wider than primitive moralizing.

I say this as someone who can't stand the place, who thinks it magnifies the worst aspects of gay male life and lends credence to the standard homophobic equation of gayness with narcissism and mindlessness. A serious dissection of the self-absorbed frivolity of this subculture within a subculture would be well worth having. But it would have to be one

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capable of seeing that "obsessive triviality" does not encompass the reality of a style whose exuberant, risky raunchiness we may one day realize contained the seeds of a far-reaching social transformation. *Faggots* is not remotely that needed dissection. It is a plastic, trashy artifact of the worst aspects of a scene to which it high-mindedly condescends.

Arthur Bell's *Kings Don't Mean a Thing* is a far more talented, rewarding book. As readers of Bell's articles in *The Village Voice* know, he has uncommon gifts: a stylish, sometimes venomous wit; a born storyteller's ability to construct narrative that minimizes clutter and maximizes dramatic tension; a sharp nose for detecting pomposity—sharp enough even to catch himself in an occasional pose or two. *Kings* displays Bell's talents to advantage. Dealing with a large cast of characters and a complicated series of events, he shows uncanny timing in parcelling out the exact amounts of information we need at any given point to make sense of the tale and to hold our interest in it. Bell's humor is also omnipresent in the book, and his penchant for mere deviltry is under better control than in some of his *Voice* pieces. Moreover, *Kings* has a minimum of stale political rhetoric, moralistic harangues, simplistic portraits of saints or sinners.

Good as the book is as a well-wrought murder mystery, it is not nearly good enough as a substantive exploration of John Knight's story—of the social and class values that shaped his life and the patterns of closetry and contractual sex that ended it. Bell makes a few offhanded stabs at dealing with the larger themes inherent in his material, but his particular gifts as a writer—descriptive not analytic—ill equip him for the task. Had the publisher's claims for the book been more modest, its deficiencies might have been less grating. *Kings* is not a "groundbreaking" combination of subjective disclosure and objective reporting: that particular ground has been broken by so many hands scarcely a tillable patch remains.

Nor is it an "in-depth" investigation. Bell evades most of the important questions inherent in John Knight's story with slick psychologisms that might embarrass the most orthodox Freudian. Knight never had a father of his own. Ergo: "some kind of reverse transference" explains his attraction to younger men ("paternalism [taking] the form of incest"). Knight never sought out a "male peer" (i.e. someone "affluent, intelligent"), preferring lower-class men. The reason?—the "hypocrisy" of his life. Knight was involved with hustlers. Why? "When you're rich and bothered and restless, a hustler is easier to cope with than a sit-down dinner for six."

Such slick, vapid reductionism is distressing coming from an openly gay writer who must know that comparably simplistic explanations have long been standard fare in disparaging the attraction of E.M. Forster (among others) to men from backgrounds and classes different from his own—a "flight from intimacy" has been the usual summation. As if intimacy can be reliably concocted from a recipe calling for precise dollops of shared tastes in literature, tailors and after-dinner brandy. As if those attracted to people who are complementary opposites rather than mirror images are somehow unhealthy, "hypocritical." As if—as other gay heroes, Walt Whitman and Allen Ginsberg, have had no trouble understanding—the mutual attraction of older and younger needs any "explanation" beyond the obvious appeal on the one side of vitality, curiosity and physical beauty, and on the other of information, expertise and experience (or at least their illusion). In a society like ours, where "ageism" is rampant, attraction between two people from different generations often requires, at least initially, the exchange of cash or gifts before the attraction can take on psychological legitimacy—above all, in the eyes of the two people themselves; and this is as true of the straight world as of the gay.

Bell seems oblivious to such nuances. When he turns to describing male hustlers he reduces them to a few categories so rigid and limited in their definitions that scant room is left for any range of personality or subtlety of motive. He refers to Felix Melandez, the 19-year-old who fell in love with John Knight and apparently killed him in a jealous rage, as a "classic" street hustler—whatever that means. He further tells us that Melandez and Knight, despite their widely differing socioeconomic backgrounds, shared "the same patriarchal oppression." That phrase carries a certain fashionable resonance, but what does it actually tell us about the particular qualities of temperament that brought the two men together, and drove one to kill the other? Arthur Bell is a good storyteller, but he's a lousy psychologist and a worse sociologist. The story of John Knight's style of life and manner of death contains the potential ingredients for a powerful probe into contemporary American life. *Kings* does not exploit them. The book should be valued for what it is: the proverbial "good read," stylish and titillating.

In his new novel, *Ladies' Man*, Richard Price uses material of comparable

CHARLESTON MORNING

When you get up at five a.m.
at the Holiday Inn in Charleston, West Virginia
the one on the river across from the railroad station
to drink the last of the bourbon
padding down the corridor in your bare feet
to the ice machine in undershirt and trousers
then relight a half-smoked cigar
to sit at the window to watch for the train
invariably late on the way from
D.C. to Huntington and Cincinnati and Chicago
it is very good to look at the Kanawha
and the old station covered with snow
glance at the first page of the Gazette
read three or four pages of LeCarre
look at the Book the maid
has left open to Job 34
furthermore E-li-hu answered and said
hear my words, o ye wise men
you are alone and
you are stealing time

Jestyn Portugill

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rawness to work much closer to the bone. The book does have one serious flaw. Price gives his protagonist, Kenny Baker, so many resources of humor, resilience and attractiveness that his angst seems almost feigned, his isolation a chosen condition, not a rueful necessity. This miscalculation seems a function of Price's immense gusto as a writer, his inability to control his own euphoric vitality. His pages crackle with highwire energy, dazzlingly inventive dialogue, hilarious turns of phrase. If this unrelenting vivacity works against the believability of the central character, it serves well in recreating the vivid backdrops against which the hero is placed. This is particularly true in the final section of the novel, when heterosexual Kenny is taken by a gay friend on a tour of the Greenwich Village sex bars. Price evokes the explosive frenzy of that scene, its roller coaster ride through the emotions, with far more gutsy authenticity than anything to be found in the pages of *Faggots* or *Kings*. (In fact, of all the gay novels I know, only Andrew Holleran's recent *Dancer From the Dance* captures the tumultuous underside of gay male life as well as *Ladies' Man*, a work that only incidentally focuses on it.)

Nor does Price show the platitudinous contempt for the "outer fringe" that Kramer and Bell do. In Bell the contempt is concealed in an occasional aside ("The clubs where the liberated prefer to congregate are dark, dank, unfriendly"); in Kramer, the contempt is pervasive, rhetorical and, at the end of his novel, so throbbingly self-righteous as to be indistinguishable from the most rigid kind of mainstream morality ("What would happen if all their toys and all their costumes were taken away. They might be forced . . . to love."). Price's protagonist, Kenny, also mouths some of the rhetoric and assumptions of the traditional culture ("You can't do bars and monogamy at the same time . . . everybody's looking for that one person. Straight, gay, no different."). But Kenny's words are an organic expression of the character's ambivalence, not (as in Bell) tag lines of snide superiority or (as in Kramer) contrived and lumpish soapbox oratory. In putting Kenny through the emotional mill, moreover, Price makes it clear that he, unlike other writers working the wilder side of today's sexual scene, is able to see the underside as an arena where, with reckless excess, some liberating possibilities are being glimpsed, some psychic breakthroughs won.

Martin Duberman

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The Coup
by John Updike

(Alfred A. Knopf; $8.95)

At a table in an open-air café in Nice there sits a small, prim, unprepossessing black man, the former president of the impoverished mythical state of Kush (formerly the mythical Noire), ex-Colonel Hakim "Happy" Felix Ellelloû. Having narrowly escaped death at the hands of Kush's new, pragmatic young president, Ellelloû (whose name means "freedom" in Berber) has been pensioned off, along with one of his four wives and a motley gang of children, so long as he remains "anonymous" and "silent." But Ellelloû sits at the café scribbling his memoirs, an account of his experience as dictator of Kush. What he has to say is mordant, outrageous, and bitterly self-mocking, a lengthy monologue that really *is* a coup of sorts, constituting Updike's most experimental novel to date. Kush is Ellelloû's fiction just as *The Coup* is Updike's fastidiously circumscribed fiction, a country set in an "Africa" of words. And what a virtuoso display Updike gives us! Not even *Pale Fire*, another inspired work by another displaced "ruler," is more darkly comic, more abrasively surreal, than Updike's Ellelloû's testimony.

Africa's most majestic feature, Ellelloû tells us, is the relative absence of Man. But where Man exists there is either pitiless suffering (northern Kush has suffered a five-year drought), or buffoonery (literally everyone Ellelloû encounters, from his four incompatible wives to his comic Russian "advisors" and the slangy, hearty, PR-minded Americans who call their exploitation of oil-rich Kush "philanthropy," are buffoons, locked into the most stereotyped of languages). Where Márquez's Faulknerian *The Autumn of the Patriarch* presented a bizarre dictator seen from without, filtered through the voices of a number of close observers, Updike's Nabokovian *The Coup* gives us the dictator in his own voice, as he sardonically and brokenly recounts the comic-opera events that led to his spiritual assassination. Nabokov's presence is felt throughout, but lightly and ingeniously, for Updike, unlike the self-indulgent Nabokov of *Ada*, that most relentlessly private of novels, has linked personal and authorial obsessions so gracefully with the outer chaos of Kush and the drama of the "superparanoids" America and Russia that Ellelloû's story works quite satisfactorily as a story, without self-referential props. Updike's homage to Nabokov is clear enough, and rather touching: it is Ellelloû's "opposite number," the Soviet Colonel Sirin, who saves his life at a characteristically absurd moment—and Sirin, as we know, was Nabokov's early pseudonym.

Ellelloû is, or was, a devout Muslim, and a jargon-ridden Marxist whose hatred for all things American—"America, that fountainhead of obscenity and glut"—is explained partly by the fact that he attended a small college in Franchise, Wisconsin where he received an unfair grade of B- in African history, from a trendy professor who was jealous of his relationship with a white girl named Candy, and partly by the fact that he married this girl and brought her back to his kingdom, where their marriage quickly deteriorated. (Candy, called "Pinktoes" by the blacks she compulsively pursues, is coarse-mouthed, nagging, stereotyped as any cartoon suburban wife; even her most ostensibly idealistic actions—like marrying a ragamuffin Negro who seemed so lonely at college—are motivated by clichéd notions of "liberalism." And of course she marries Ellelloû to enrage her bigoted father.)

Updike acknowledges numerous sources for his African information—books by contemporary historians and

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scholars, *National Geographic*, *Beau Geste*, children's books, *The Koran*—but his Africa, like his Kush, is a surrealist creation; and so, in part, is his increasingly debased and contemptible America. Ellelloû, composing his hallucinatory memoirs, pursues himself quixotically through a bewildering variety of masks. He views himself as a child, as a college boy in an alien country, as an ambitious though idealistic young soldier, as "dictator" of an ungovernable, indeed incomprehensible country, and finally as the hapless husband of four wives, chronically impotent, the passive butt of cruel jokes. Ellelloû experiences himself in stylish Cartesian terms, as two separate selves: "the one who acts, and the 'I' who experiences. This latter is passive even in a whirlwind of the former's making, passive and guiltless and astonished." He has sent many people to their deaths, and in person decapitates the former king, an elderly, blind, decadent fellow who was "like a father to him," but the reader hasn't the sense, any more than Ellelloû does, that he *is* a murderer: his elaborate syntax convinces us otherwise.

Difficult as Kush's mountainous terrain is to navigate, by camel or Mercedes (an air-conditioned Mercedes follows the dictator as he travels disguised through his troubled country), the prose Updike has fashioned for him is even more difficult, and resembles nothing so much as an arabesque superimposed upon another arabesque. Motifs, phrases, "imagery," coarsely comic details from the "external world," Ellelloû's various and conflicting pasts, are rigorously interwoven into complex designs. The outer world, filling up slowly with American and Soviet junk, is a nightmare of vulgarity, and depressingly simple-minded; the inner world, the world of Ellelloû's ceaseless brooding, is correspondingly rich, elusive, teasing, ingenious. Updike has been accused in earlier, far more straightforward narratives like *Couples* and *The Centaur* (the novel that *The Coup* most resembles in its audacity and inspiration, if not in its tenderness) of writing self-indulgent, tortuous prose. That Updike has a painter's eye for detail, that he glories in what Joyce would call the suchness of a thing, and sees no reason, since it exists, *not* to describe it in detail, seems to me quite evident; but surely this is one of his strengths, one of the great virtues of his writing. By assigning the prose voice of *The Coup* to the defeated dictator Updike allows himself more freedom (or license) than he might ordinarily allow himself, and Ellelloû, plunging onward in his memoirs, as in his murky grotesque situation-comedy adventures, does the difficult work of characterizing himself. He remarks at one point that he knows his sentences are "maddeningly distended by seemingly imperative refinements and elaborations"; at another point—as he is about to execute the old king with a giant scimitar taken from its case in the People's Museum of Imperialist Atrocities—he thinks, "My mind in its exalted, distended condition had time to entertain many irrelevant images." Updike echoes or parodies earlier Updike, the earlier Updike (in the story "Wife-Wooing") paying homage to James Joyce of *The Sirens*: "Wide wadis remember ancient water, weird mesas have been shipped into shape by wicked, unwitnessed winds." When Ellelloû burns alive, on a pyramid of American gifts to the drought-stricken Kushians of the north, one Donald Gibbs, who assures him that his people really *want* this "manna" (*Kix Trix Chex Pops*, cream of celery soup, sorghum meant for cattle, and shipped in transparent sacks along with wood chips and dead mice) he thinks with characteristic scrupulousness:

> *I could smell on the victim, under the sweat of his long stale wait and the bland, oysterish odor of his earnestness, the house of his childhood, the musty halls, the cozy bathroom soaps, the glue of his adolescent hobbies, the aura of his alcoholic and sexually innocent parents, the ashtray scent of dissatisfaction. What dim wish to do right, hatched by the wavery blue light of the television set with its curious international shadows, had led him to the fatal edge of a safety that he had thought had no limits?*

This is Ellelloû's voice; and in sharp contrast to his indefatigable syntactical acrobatics the other voices of the novel are either flat and silly or a parody of US advertising rhythm and jargon. The wife who joins him in exile, the openly promiscuous Sittina, complains of lack of money "since you blew the dictatorship"; Candy greets his infrequent visits with "Holy Christ, look who it isn't," refuses to listen to his formal Islamic pronouncements which are, to her, "Kismet crap," and says of his strategic execution of the old king: "Well, chief, how's top-level tricks? Chopping old Edumu's noggin off didn't seem to raise the humidity any." Updike does this all very skillfully, and one guesses that *The Coup* was immensely enjoyable to write, once the anklethongs of African "history" were disposed of. For instance, Ellelloû discovers that office supplies stolen from the capital city of Kush are being smuggled by camel caravan to Iran, and this embarrassment is explained cheerfully by the caravan's leader:

> *"The Shahansha has much wish to modernize. In his hurry he buys typewriters from West Germany and paper from Swedes and then discover only one type spool fit typewriter, only one type eraser not smudge paper. American know-how meanwhile achieve obsolescence such that only fitting spool stockpiled in Accra as aid-in-goods when cocoa market collapse. Formula of typewriter eraser held secret and cunning capitalists double, redouble price when Shah push up oil price to finance purchase of jet fighters, computer software, and moon rocks. French however operating through puppet corporations in Dahomey have secured formula as part of multi-billion-franc deferred-interest somatic-collateral package and erect eraser factory near gum arabic plantations. Much borax also in deal, smuggled by way of Quagadougou. Now Sadat has agreed to let goods across Nile if Shahanshah agrees to make anti-Israeli statement and buy ten thousand tickets to* son-et-lumière *show at Sphinx."*

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Everything, every human act or gesture or vision, is explained away glibly in language taken from popular magazines or television shows: American women are "unbridled Amazons who drive our men outward from the home to perform those feats of engineering and merchandising that dumfound the world"; Ellelloû's mistress, formerly a native wench whose grandmother was a leopard, soon acquires Western clothes, shoes, wristwatches, even contact lenses (which make her brown eyes blue), and assures Ellelloû that her response to his love-making is genuine: "Only my President can lead me so utterly to forget myself, I am led to the brink of another world, and grow terrified lest I fall in and be annihilated. It's neat."

Beneath, behind, informing every scene of this inspired novel, which a superficial reading might judge as almost *too* inspired (a *tour de force* against readers' expectations, like Updike's very first novel *The Poorhouse Fair*, which was anything but a "young man's novel"), is a passionate and despairing cynicism which I take to be, for all its wit, Updike's considered view of where we are and where we are going. No moral uplift here; no gestures, like Bellow's, toward the essential "health" of the commonplace. If American know-how is only another word for exploitation, if American statesmen (like the unctuous Klipspringer) and advisers are asinine jargon-filled fools, the Soviets are, if possible, even more ridiculous. "Islamic socialism" is "pure" of corrupting capitalistic investments, but it has the disadvantage of not working—so long as Ellelloû's anti-American policy holds, his people are doomed to die of thirst and starvation. Ellelloû is devoutly religious, and everyone who surrounds him is atheistic and materialistic, but what does faith in Allah matter when the sky is pitilessly blank, and all Ellelloû can think of in defense of his faith is the feeble observation, "The drought is a form of the Manifest Radiance, and our unhappiness within it is blasphemy. The book accuses: *Your hearts are taken up with worldly gain from the cradle to the grave.*"

America, Updike hypothesizes, reached in the 1960s and early 1970s (and *The Coup* takes place during the Watergate hearings) "that dangerous condition when a religion, to contradict its own sensation that it is dying, lashes out against others. Thus the Victorians flung their Christianity against the heathen of the world after Voltaire and Darwin had made its tenets ridiculous; thus the impoverished sultan of Morocco in 1591 hurled troops across the Sahara. . . . a conquest that profited him nothing and destroyed the Songhai empire forever." And: "It may be . . . that in the attenuation, dessication, and death of religions the world over, a new religion is being formed in the indistinct hearts of men, a religion without a God, without prohibitions and compensatory assurances, a religion whose antipodes are motion and stasis, whose one rite is the exercise of energy, and in which exhausted forms like the quest, the vow, the expiation, and the attainment through suffering of wisdom are, emptied of content, put in the service of a pervasive expenditure whose ultimate purpose is entropy. . . . Millions now enact the trials of this religion, without giving it a name, or attributing to themselves any virtue."

("The Fifties were when all the fun was," Candy says bitterly, "though nobody knew it at the time.")

Judging from the stories in "another mode" in *Museums and Women*, and the highly self-conscious voice of *A Month of Sundays*, it might have seemed that Updike's genius was for fiction and not metafiction. (For why parody art if you can create it, why devise clever paste pearls if you own genuine pearls?) But *The Coup*, which makes only the most perfunctory gestures toward old-fashioned realism, let alone naturalism, is an immensely inspired and energetic work, striking, on page after page, the comic brilliancy that leaps from Joyce's *Ulysses*, in such chapters as *The Cyclops*, for instance, in which ferocious exaggeration becomes an art that is self-consuming; in its possibly more immediate relationship to Nabokov and Márquez, the novel sets down the improbable beside the probable, creating a "fictional" nation that is altogether convincing, and yet populating it with fools and knaves and tough-talking nagging wives who have the depth, if not the distinctiveness, of playing cards. *The Coup*'s coup is style. If entropy is capitalism's goal, just as it is "socialism's" goal, if life in our time has become so sterile that even Ellelloû's traitorous minister Ezana can say, casually, "Life is like an overlong drama through which we sit being nagged by vague memories of having read the reviews," there is all the more need for style, for art, for the unique, quirky, troubling visions that our finest artists force upon us.

Updike has grown amazingly cynical with the passage of time: how odd that the author of *Pigeon Feathers* should be evolving, before our eyes, into the Mark Twain of *The Mysterious Stranger*, or the Swift of Gulliver's final voyage, or the Samuel Beckett who says laconically that failure, not success, interests him! One would have not guessed the direction his novels might take, considering even the bitterly ironic ending of *Rabbit, Run* (which, if set beside *Rabbit Redux* of a decade later, is nevertheless characterized by an odd "Fifties" op-

MOUNTAIN CAMP

He sits back straight against a pine
and waits for day. To the left, curled cold,
guns by their side his partners nap.
A few coals shine where—two days chased—
they risked a fire. Right, he sees
the three tired horses, tied,
two down on the snow, his black mare up
restless. He plans tomorrow: ride
northeast, locate a hiding place. Between
the coals and mare, he thinks he sees
a shape like a weasel slide by the pile of rocks.
Now is the coldest time. In the dark,
slow paced, this pine tree's creak supplies
the bass for a song he once could strum.
The mare has lain back down.
Tears would freeze. So near
they seem in bullet range, the stars,
whose silence seeping into his head
he chords on the rifle across his knees.

Richard Dankleff

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timism despite the current of its remorseless plot—the sense of a world of promise, a world awaiting exploration, even exploitation, to which the dissatisfied Candy alludes in her banal fashion, calling it "fun"), and the understated, unheroic conclusion of *Couples*, in which the hero and heroine, about whose emotions we know so very much, in such exhaustive detail, become, merely, in the end, just "another couple" in suburban America. Admirers of Updike's sardonic Bech stories, however, have sensed quite clearly the drift of Updike's mind, which finds its sharpest, least muffled, and least sentimental expression through the *persona* of Henry Bech, Updike's daimonic opposite (bachelor, Jew, perpetually blocked novelist who, at the conclusion of a recent story, finds that he cannot even sign his own name); Bech's view of the universe and of man's striving within it is as droll as Céline's, and he would, adroitly, with an allegorical instinct as habitual as Updike's, sketch in quick analogues between the drying-up of creative powers and the drying-up of fertile lands.

The world in which "Kush" is located is, after all, a "global village" in which individuals no longer exist, and tribes are relocated in a matter of days, to make way for multi-level parking garages, shopping malls, and McDonald's hamburger restaurants. Ellelloû's prophetic zeal is commendable, but who among his people cares?—if "You will be Xed out by Exxon, ungulfed by Gulf, crushed by the US, disenfranchised by France, not only you but your entire loving nation of succulent wives, loyal brothers, righteous fathers, and aged but still amusing mothers. All inked out, absolutely. . . . In the vocabulary of profit there is no word for 'pity.'"

Is such cynicism soluble in art? Indeed yes.

Joyce Carol Oates

Joyce Carol Oates's most recent novel is *Son of the Morning* (Vanguard).

The Guns of Lattimer
by Michael Novak

(Basic Books; $10.95)

The guns of Lattimer were in the hands of 90-odd Pennsylvania coal country deputy sheriffs. Some, no doubt, were born bullies, but most were respectable middle-aged men, churchgoers, who owed their livelihood to the coal operators of the Eastern middle coal field beneath Luzerne County. Few were familiar with the 16-shot Winchester rifles which they raised to their shoulders on the sultry afternoon of September 10, 1887, as some 400 miners filed past on their way to call out on strike fellow workers at Pardee No. 1, a mine in Lattimer, a few miles northeast of Hazelton. It was a festive, relaxed crowd following an American flag, mostly Hungarians, Poles and Slovaks, jackets over their arms, wiping their necks and brows with handkerchiefs as they walked along a dusty road. In a minute or two, it was all over. Eight men died on the spot, nearly 60 lay wounded, stunned by the shock of bullet-torn flesh, as the rest fled the field, crying in terror, or huddled flat in the nearest ditch. Eleven of the wounded would die. "It took an hour to clear the ground of the dead and wounded," Michael Novak writes in his graphic account of the massacre. "The sun was just about setting when the last [street] car left with its load of injured. Nothing but blood, foot marks, and an assemblage of dumfounded men and women remained at Lattimer."

Novak, currently a Fellow of the American Enterprise Institute in Washington, DC, and author of several penetrating works on ethnicity, politics, culture and sports, has recreated with skill and a painstaking attention to detail the events that lead to the tragedy at Lattimer and the trial of the deputies and of Sheriff James L. Martin that followed. Though more were killed and wounded at Lattimer (the worst labor massacre in the nation up to that time) than at the Boston massacre, the tragedy has been little noted, even by historians of labor and of the United Mine Workers. Novak argues with justification that this is so because the strikers were Slavs, "the most silent, and most invisible, Americans."

When Lattimer is mentioned, incidentally, it is usually cited in a litany of the violence visited upon American workers over the years by the bosses. It was certainly that, but as Novak makes abundantly clear it was more complex as true tragedies often are. For one thing, the Slavs were frequently as exploited by their fellow miners, the "natives," as by the mine owners. Miners were paid for the coal brought out, as Novak reminds us, and not for the time put in. The miner's assistant, a job usually held by the immigrant newcomers, did the difficult work while the miner, who kept two-thirds of their joint take, merely pointed out the day's work and supervised the cuts or dynamite blasts needed to shake the coal loose. The members of the jury who acquitted the sheriff and his posse were workers, and the fear of the sullen Slavs that sustained the deputies was shared by native workers and the middle class of the coal region alike.

This is not to say that there were no villains. Novak's sympathetic portrayal of Sheriff Martin serves to point them up—the bullies among the deputies, the hard-line coal operators and the Pennsylvanian patricians, men like defense attorney Henry W. Palmer, who viewed the Slavs as "the scum" of Europe. Our tragic destiny is hidden in our virtues, Novak believes. "Anglo-Americans," he writes, "share with other cultures, more than is usually recognized, a strong belief in the efficacy of force, hidden under an admirable respect for law and free institutions. . . . The deputies truly believed that American institutions were uniquely free; that the foreigners were not prepared for them; that the foreigners, having been 'brought up under the lash,' respected only the lash, so that it might be the duty of good Americans to give them their own kind of lesson."

Fortunately, there was another lesson in Lattimer, one learned by the mine workers. John Fahy, the UMW organizer for the district who had favored an alien tax on the foreign miners, changed his tactics as a consequence of the massacre, building new locals of the union on the strengths and peculiarities of the newcomers, seeing to it that they were well represented among union officers and on union committees. He added 10,000 new

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members to the union rolls shortly thereafter, laying the foundation for the future growth and success of the union in the anthracite fields.

The Guns of Lattimer is a minor classic, a solid contribution to American history and well worth reading. But Novak's masterful command of his material is marred, I think, by his fictional vignettes, an attempt to recreate the feelings, fantasies, and inner lives of imagined participants interspersed at critical points throughout the historical narrative. By themselves, these sections are well done but the fictional technique does not really work and ultimately detracts from the impact of the history. Moreover, there is a tendency to allow the fictional to slip into the actual sweep of events. For instance, Novak reports one of the dead victims as being within 10 to 12 feet of the sheriff: "He had seen the sheriff pull his revolver and point it at the man with the flag. . . . He had been frightened. He did not hear the order to fire. His back was blown open by a bullet." Presumably, we know where Mathias Czaja was standing and how he was killed, but we can't know the rest for he did not live to tell us.

Perhaps I am being picky, but I cannot help but feel that the tragedy at Lattimer can stand on its own without imaginative embellishment. Nonetheless, Novak has accomplished what he set out to do, leaving us "the legacy of simple, weary men, blown back by a sudden explosion on a hot September day." It is no small achievement.

Thomas R. Brooks

Thomas R. Brooks is the author of *Toil and Trouble* (Dell) and, most recently of *Clint: the Biography of a Labor Intellectual* (Atheneum).

Tutankhamun
The Untold Story
by Thomas Hoving

(Simon & Schuster; $12.95)

In 1963, the New York Graphic Society published what quickly became a standard work on the tomb of Tutankhamun. Entitled *Tutankhamen*, the volume carried the imprimatur of the Chief Curator of the National Museums of France, who wrote the text, and of the Director General of the Antiquities Service of the United Arab Republic, who annotated the 75 color plates.

Enshrined as the frontispiece of the book is a photograph of a carved head showing the boy-king emerging from a lotus flower. According to the note furnished by Dr. Anwar Shoukry, the Director General, the handsome stucco bust was found "at the entry of the tomb."

The more piquant truth is finally revealed by Thomas Hoving. The lotus head made its unexpected debut (in March 1924) from a Fortnum & Mason crate marked "Red Wine" in a storage area known as the "lunch tomb" adjoining Howard Carter's excavation site in the Valley of the Kings. It was wadded with surgical cotton and ostensibly ready for shipment. Only by chance did the head come to light during an inventory of Tutankhamun finds after the Egyptian Antiquities Service had finally won control of the dig.

As Hoving remarks, the discovery caused "much *kalaam*," or confusion. A frantic coded cable was sent to Carter, who was then visiting England, imploring him to come up with a plausible explanation. The sender of the cable—Herbert E. Winlock, one of five Metropolitan Museum of Art experts working with Carter—went so far as to propose an alibi: "To protect you Lacau and Engelbach have suggested them [Egyptian officials] you have bought for account of Lord Carnarvon, 1923, last year from Akhenaten. Do not know whether they believe that actually."

Carter rose to the occasion by explaining that the capital piece had turned up in the debris at the tomb entrance, and had been stowed in the wine crate only until it could be properly handled. This is hardly convincing, Hoving points out, since there is no mention of the lotus head in Carter's meticulous "Journal of Entry" listing each Tutankhamun find.

"Miraculously," Hoving adds, "the story of the lotus head never surfaced." But it is really not so astonishing. Like governments, museums and archaeologists have their official secrets, their cover stories, and their 50-year rules protecting confidential archives. Even victims acquire a stake in the agreed-upon lie (Dr. Shoukry surely must have known the true provenance of the lotus head) because the truth may expose the complicity or impotence of officialdom.

What is providential is that Tom Hoving, of all people, should be the spiller of the beans—and that he should be doing so, of all times, at the very moment that the King Tut show which he organized was about to open at his own Metropolitan Museum. But his volume is more than revisionist history; it can also be read as a kind of apologia, because the flaws that he discerns in Howard Carter are uncommonly similar to those he himself evinced during his stormy tenure as Metropolitan director, from 1966 to 1977. Wittingly or not, Hoving has written a very odd book, a Freudian *double-entendre* as well as a treatise on the most sensational of all archaeological discoveries.

To all but insiders, Hoving's revisionism will come as a surprise. Some of the most famous stories about Carnarvon and Carter turn out to be pleasant fiction. "Can you see anything?" the anxious patron is supposed to have inquired on that fateful November day in 1922 when Carter first peered into the antechamber of the magnificent tomb. "Yes, wonderful things," Carter is said to have responded —and then the awestruck discoverers claimed that they retired for a sleepless night.

Sleepless it was because a party of four spent the night casing the tomb before its formal opening, as Hoving pretty conclusively demonstrates by drawing on Metropolitan archives. Thus at the outset the record was falsified, and an attitude of proprietorship was asserted. After all, the fifth Earl of Carnarvon had privately financed an eight-year search for Tutankhamun's tomb, which he and Carter looked upon as a sort of European concession.

When the official opening took place, it never occurred to either to invite a representative of the Antiquities Service or the Egyptian press—the sole reporter present was a chum of Carter's, the correspondent of *The Times* of London. Later, that newspaper was given exclusive world rights on all news about the find under a profitable arrangement that provoked outraged protests, especially in Cairo. As the archaeological writer Arthur Weigall

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presciently warned in a private letter to Carter:

> *Here you found a tomb belonging to the Egyptian government, a tomb in a public place, under the immediate eye of native and foreign tourists, a tomb containing Egypt's 'sacred dead,' a discovery belonging in no way to you, but to the world and especially to Egypt—an Egypt seething with hatred of England. Look what Sirry Pasha, a high government official, said on Sunday—'It is an unheard of thing that the Egyptian papers should have to take all news of an archaeological discovery in Egypt from a London newspaper.'*

Weigall had given Carter, in Hoving's words, the "rare gift of absolute truth." But to no avail. The excavator and his patron shared an outlook of entitlement, and were almost willfully blind to political realities. Their attitude was memorably formulated by Lord Cromer, who, as British Consul General was Egypt's para-pharoah from 1883 to 1907: "The Egyptians should be permitted to govern themselves after the fashion in which Europeans think they ought to be governed."

In 1923, the unthinkable came to pass when a nationalist regime was elected by the Egyptians in a protest against their status as a British protectorate. One of the volatile ingredients of the new nationalism was the widespread belief that Europeans were pillaging the treasures of the pharaohs, in complicity with the European-dominated Antiquities Service. That very year, after all, a Berlin museum had seen fit to unveil the spectacular bust of Nefertiti, which German diggers had spirited out of Egypt a decade earlier.

The cries of pillage were not a paranoid fantasy. In theory, all excavations were subject to a 50-50 split, with the first choice going to the Antiquities Service. There was an exception: in the event that an intact tomb was discovered, all the trove was to remain in Egypt.

Hoving shows conclusively that Carter tried to jigger the historic evidence to make a specious case that the Tutankhamun tomb had been entered by ancient thieves in circumstances that justified a 50-50 split. In the end, after bitter litigation, Carter's claims were dismissed and the government given complete control of the excavation, with all objects going to the Cairo museum. (Lord Carnarvon's estate was later fully compensated for all the peer's expenses.)

Far more damagingly, Hoving for the first time discloses that both Carnarvon and Carter were deeply involved in the clandestine sale of Egyptian antiquities to American museums. Between 1917 and 1922, the Metropolitan Museum acquired from them 225 pieces for a sum equivalent to $265,305.60, or roughly $2.5 million in today's values. Carnarvon's motive was to assure the financial solvency of Carter, who realized nearly $40,000 in profits from these sales, a fortune at the time. Following Carnarvon's death in 1923, Carter negotiated the sale of the earl's private collection to the Metropolitan for $216,000, with a percentage commission again going to Carter.

Additionally, it now develops that Howard Carter probably extracted a fair number of smaller objects from Tutankhamun's tomb, and that these can be seen under misleading labels in five American museums. If Hoving is correct, and I see no reason to doubt him, Tut's funerary offerings have for years been on discreet display at the Metropolitan, the Brooklyn Museum, the Cleveland Museum of Art, the William Rockhill Nelson Art Gallery in Kansas City, and the Cincinnati Art Museum—a scoop indeed.

To be excessively sanctimonious about this rattling of dusty skeletons is pointless. Anyone who knows anything about the antiquities trade will find little that is novel or shocking in Hoving's account of machinations long past. Judged by the standards of their time, Carter and Carnarvon were playing by the rules. They felt entitled to a share of spoils as a just reward for an excavation carried out under private auspices by an exemplary team of scholars that was preserving for all humanity objects of beauty and significance.

Their offense was insensibility. Because they ignored Egyptian suspicions about European looting (suspicions that were not so ill-founded, it turns out), and because they simply could not take the natives seriously, they precipitated a crisis that produced a Draconian antiquities law with absolute prohibitions against the division of finds. In due course, similar legislation was adopted in other third world countries, to the distress of archaeologists, and to the despair of museums.

I do not think it perverse to see in all of this certain implicit parallels with Tom Hoving's troubled tenure as Metropolitan director.

* * *

"Who was Howard Carter?" Hoving writes. "What had he really done?" Our author goes on:

> *Dedicated, a man of awesome courage, energetic, obsessed with system, driven by ambition, he accomplished something which no one before him had been able to do or even conceive of doing. Yet, impetuous, stubborn, insensitive, tactless, deceitful and mendacious at times, Howard Carter undermined his achievements and tortured himself and others throughout his entire life. . . . Perhaps the best way to describe Howard Carter himself would be as the last and greatest Egyptian adventurer.*

Not a bad summary of Hoving's own qualities. From the moment of his designation as director—he was Mayor John V. Lindsay's Parks Commissioner at the time—the 36-year-old Hoving very quickly established himself as a condottiere (the word is Murray Kempton's). The once staid museum virtually exploded with enterprise: a prodigious expansion plan, controversial "blockbuster" shows (beginning with *Harlem on My Mind*), multi-million-dollar acquisitions, a charivari of happenings.

There was never any doubt about Hoving's energy, intelligence, showmanship or courage. What undermined his achievements was the air of absolute proprietorship that he assumed, even though the museum heavily depended on public funds and, though privately governed, was a public institution. Confronted with the tribal nationalisms of New York City, and with an aggressively curious press, Hoving in his crucial first years gave the impression that what the Met did was its own business—the most deplorable instance being his misleading denial in 1972 of wholesale "deaccessioning" of museum art.

If Carter and Carnarvon viewed the people of Egypt as ill-informed and incompetent, Hoving, whether consciously or not, communicated the same impression about lay objections to the museum's curatorial decisions. When in 1972, the Metropolitan announced the acquisition for a record one million dollars of a Greek calyx krater, Hoving found it intolerable that skeptics should doubt his story that the pot for decades had been in a Beirut dealer's hatbox—to believe otherwise would be almost as incredible (say) as alleging that Howard Carter had pilfered King Tut's treasures.

Even in his own constituency of scholars, collectors, connoisseurs and curators, Hoving needlessly encouraged an impression of mendacity, with the result that he lacked allies in 1977 when a controversy exploded over his

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recommendation that the Metropolitan approve a Walter H. Annenberg Communications Center, of which he was to be founding director, to disseminate via television the glories of art. (Standing behind him, in every one of these disputes, was Douglas Dillon, the museum president, an establishment worthy something like Lord Carnarvon.)

When the Annenberg proposal died, Hoving found himself out of a job and in professional limbo, an unemployed condotierre who was reduced to the indignity of being an arts correspondent on ABC television's ill-starred "20/20" program. Still, and to his credit, Hoving also found time to write this extraordinary book. I forgive him much for doing so, and indeed I admire his *chutzpah*. Numbed as we are by the extravagances of Tutomania, Thomas Hoving has given us—as Arthur Weigall once gave Howard Carter—the gift of truth. We are alerted again to the dangers of accepting on faith the authorized version of history, even if it initially bears the exalted seal of the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Karl E. Meyer

Karl E. Meyer, a former *Washington Post* correspondent, is the author of *The Pleasures of Archaeology* and *The Plundered Past*. In February, William Morrow will publish his new book, *The Art Museum: Power, Money, Ethics*, a Twentieth Century Fund study.

Brief Reviews

Current Fiction

A Tomb for Boris Davidovich by Danilo Kiš translated by Duška Mikič-Mitchell

(Harcourt Brace Jovanovich; $6.95)

Not since Malraux and Koestler has the figure of the modern revolutionary been so memorably depicted as in the works of contemporary East European novelists. The Hungarian George Konrád in his as-yet-unpublished new novel, *The Loser*, and the Yugoslav Danilo Kiš in *A Tomb for Boris Davidovich* present portraits of professional East European revolutionaries who defy their middle-class, intellectual, and in most cases Jewish heritage by appearing perfectly snug in their ideological uniforms. In truth they always squirm in them a little, just enough to arouse suspicion. The tragedy of these men and women is that even as they embrace the iron rigors of revolutionary life, even as they revel in their fanaticism, they betray traces of undisciplined curiosity, wit, spirit. Unknowingly they reveal their humanity and suffer immeasurably for it.

Konrád in his new work traces the life history of a Hungarian fighter-intellectual; Kiš presents a series of terse biographies, and remarks that his revolutionaries' stories "would have to be told in Romanian, Hungarian, Ukrainian, or Yiddish; or, rather, in a mixture of all these languages." The peculiarities of the East-Central European locale, as well as quirks in the history of modern Communism are behind Kiš's bizarre narratives, although in assuming the role of an historian culling relevant biographical data from fragmentary and often highly questionable sources, he pretends to be as precise as his heroes. The facts, however, are too horrible, and imagination is a balm. Kiš finds that he cannot "forgo the pleasure of narration, which allows the author the deceptive idea that he is creating the world and thereby, as they say, changing it."

Like most East European writers providing insights into their region's recent history, Danilo Kiš is mindful of the interconnectedness of past and present. In one of his tales a Ukrainian activist, A. L. Chelyustnikov, is given the task of staging a mass in Kiev's famed Cathedral of Saint Sophia for a visiting French dignitary. The year is 1934, the great church has been used for years as a brewery; but in a matter of hours it is temporarily restored to its original function by prisoners summoned from a nearby jail. Borrowing props and a make-up man from the local theater, Chelyustnikov himself becomes a priest for the day, and celebrates mass for the mayor of Lyons and a group of grim-faced party functionaries who were also ordered to participate in the masquerade. The naive Frenchman listens for a while to Chelyustnikov's mumblings, then leaves, convinced that there is freedom of worship in Communist Russia after all. Rather than reflecting on the nature of Stalinist evils, Danilo Kiš offers a history of the cathedral, and of Holy Kiev, "mother of Russian cities," reminding us pointedly that after Russia became Christian, "the brutality of the believers in the true faith . . . was not less barbaric than pagan brutality, and the fanaticism of the believers in the tyranny of one god was still more fierce and efficient."

The title story also has far-reaching implications. Its hero, Boris Davidovich, is the prototypical radical: brilliant, volatile, obsessed, "a strange mixture of amorality, cynicism, and spontaneous enthusiasm . . . a cross between a professor and a bandit." He serves the revolution and the young Soviet state in various capacities, under different aliases, until his inevitable arrest during one of Stalin's purges. His interrogator has a difficult time breaking his will, for Boris Davidovich is a hardened nihilist by now, offering "nothing for nothing." In a way the torturer welcomes this challenge. He has a young prisoner shot before Davidovich's eyes every day that he remains silent—a diabolical reminder that integrity has no place in a prison cell. Our revolutionary is unmoved at first, but then realizes ruefully that he is not above conventional morality, and winds up signing the confession.

After relating the dreadful details of Boris Davidovich's later life (he commits suicide by leaping into a furnace in a foundry), Kiš is once more intrigued by historical parallels. The story following "A Tomb for Boris Davidovich" is based on a medieval chronicle about one Baruch David Neumann, a baptized Jew living in France, whose Christian neighbors are outraged to learn that in his new home he has reverted to the faith of his fathers. After his arrest Neumann claims that his conversion, carried out under duress, is invalid. He will not repent his sins, so his inquisitors start slaughtering young Jews and blame their deaths on Neumann's recalcitrance. Kiš ends his story with a quote from Marcus Aurelius's *Meditations*: "He who has seen the present has seen everything, that which happened in the most distant past and that which will happen in the future."

A Tomb for Boris Davidovich may be viewed as a political novel. (It can be argued, of course, that all East European writing is political. Kiš's own previous work, *Garden, Ashes*, a sensitive and highly personal, symbolic evocation of a troubled childhood, is virtually incomprehensible without some knowledge of the political history of East-Central

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Europe.) Yet what the author demonstrates most compellingly in these narratives is that his revolutionaries and political activists are animated by passions and prejudices that are far more deep-rooted than their political convictions.

Ivan Sanders

Ivan Sanders is a translator and writer. His work has appeared in *The Nation, Commonweal* and other journals.

The Cutting Edge by Penelope Gilliatt

(Coward, McCann; $8.95)

The Cutting Edge is a lightly plotted invention about the growing apart and much delayed coming together of Benedick and Peregrine Corbett, brothers, friends and soul mates from their dreadfully clever English childhood onward to their pallidly clever middle age. Things happen with Forster-like rapidity. Benedick marries, only to lose his wife to a wireless set. (It's a metaphor, meaning I suppose, that poor Joanna is not on the same wavelength as the two brothers.) Puzzled but plucky, Benedick retreats to Istanbul, Peregrine following, where he teaches school and where the brothers share a brief interval of happiness. This ends when Peregrine leaves for Italy and Paris to write seditious poetry about the Queen. (The poetry provokes remonstrating letters to the *Times*: another Forster touch.) Near the end, Joanna seeks Peregrine out in Paris and before you can say "Oh Benedick!" becomes his lover. Marriage is out of the question, "Because," as Peregrine explains, "the woman I'm in love with is in love with someone else I love." Since this is a civil English comedy, Benedick is barely bruised by his brother's betrayal. Over coffee and brioche, he, Peregrine and Joanna make it up. The novel ends.

Not a moment too soon for me. I stopped caring about these brothers midway, which is as far as I usually get in Ms. Gilliatt's film reviews for *The New Yorker*. In the reviews, the point of the film often gets lost in Ms. Gilliatt's displays of sensibility. Here I lost the thread of the relationship between the brothers in the bright maunderings of a succession of minor characters, who bulk far more energetically on the page than pale Peregrine and Benedick. Ms. Gilliatt has presented their love so obliquely that it becomes hard to distinguish from politeness. *The Cutting Edge* is sophisticated and mildly funny, but there's no great feeling in it. It's a wan book.

J.B.

An Accomplished Woman by Nancy Price

(Coward, McCann; $9.95)

Catherine Buckingham is peculiar. She doesn't wear lipstick, doesn't bob her hair, doesn't know a thing about dressing stylishly. She doesn't flirt with men. Oddly enough, she just doesn't seem to care. It's her upbringing, people say. She didn't grow up playing with dolls and friends her own age. She didn't even go to school. Thorn Wade, her reclusive guardian, gave her too much freedom (she spent her childhood roaming the streets of Detroit and assisting Thorn with his entomology projects). And now she doesn't know how to act like a woman—always running off into the fields to look for insects or raising the hoods of cars to examine their engines. She is bright and beautiful; why can't she make the most of her natural endowments?

This is the accomplished woman of Nancy Price's new novel. Ironic, humorous and understated, *An Accomplished Woman* avoids the agonized soul-searching that characterizes much of contemporary women's fiction. The novel is not an introspective probing of Catherine's fears and desires, but a somewhat distanced observation of her development as a misfit in a stultifying social world. Price strikingly illustrates the extent to which we are all products of our own and others' imaginations. The secondary characters in the novel help to form our view of Catherine; it is their limited understanding of her that makes believable her role in their midst as a gauche outsider, and that betrays their own superficiality. Catherine inspires anger and uneasiness in everyone except Thorn—himself an odd, solitary fellow with his butterflies and books and unfathomable silences. Jack Laird, a former admirer of Catherine's mother, and now a relentless pursuer of Catherine, simply believes her to be misguided and bears down upon her with expensive clothes, money and facile charm, determined to transform her into his image of what her mother had once been. The reader, however, cheers Catherine on in her stubborn unwillingness to conform.

The novel is at its strongest and most subtle in the early chapters. Price writes with admirable restraint about Catherine's adolescent confusion, and she has given a dreamlike quality to the scenes between Catherine and Thorn as they begin to realize their attraction to each other. The reader is thus removed from direct involvement with the characters, and becomes a voyeur rather than a vicarious participant in the drama. This unlikely romance between the young girl and the man who has reared her possesses an unassailable dignity and intimacy.

There is a deliberate departure from this mood when Catherine moves to Cedar Falls, Iowa, to college and beyond. The disparity between her idyllic years with Thorn and her existence with a family that is oppressively respectable, hearty, and vacuous is made clear. But why does Catherine suddenly sit back and allow herself to be dressed up and clucked over, to be dragged to miserable dances, and to date men she despises? Granted, Thorn has temporarily abandoned her to go off to France, but he'll be back. I never quite believed in this submissive side of Price's fiercely idiosyncratic heroine. And her gradual transformation from deviant child into a charming social creature is less convincing than her jaunts into Detroit as a little girl to buy furniture for the house or to eat solitary dinners at fancy hotels.

But *An Accomplished Woman* is ultimately a successful novel. Catherine may betray our expectations for her, but that is exactly what Price meant for her to do. In a scene early in the novel, Catherine is absorbed in her work with her ant

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colonies, when a young woman who is visiting stops in her room. Making idle conversation, she notices a portrait hanging on Catherine's wall, and asks if it is a relative. The painting depicts a middle-aged woman of tremendous strength and character, as calm and self-possessed as Catherine herself, a woman with creased eyes, jowls, wrinkled neck and grey hair. Catherine turns and replies, "She's me—about fifty-five or sixty, I suppose." The young woman runs downstairs, oddly disturbed. The novel possesses many similarly disturbing moments for its readers in its series of sharp ironic twists. Catherine will become an accomplished woman, but at the cost of much of her spirited distinctiveness. And she never will resemble the haggard but defiantly proud woman in the painting.

D.W.

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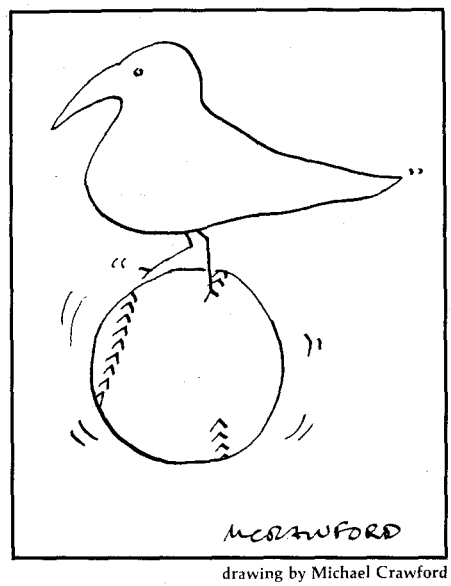
Washington Diarist

Only in America

"I have to tell you that I love America very much," Mstislav Rostropovich confessed recently under what must have been merciless questioning by the "Notes on People" section of *The New York Times*. "Now America is my second 'patrie.'" But why settle for only two? According to *Parade* magazine, the director of the National Symphony Orchestra and his wife have found comfort in their allegedly unwilling exile from the Soviet Union by establishing official residence in a third "patrie," Monaco. Monaco is known less for its love of liberty or its rich musical heritage than for its inspirational tax arrangements. This interesting fact failed to surface in the many swooning articles that appeared last fall after Rostropovich, with his dog "Puksy," briefly joined a picket line of striking National Symphony players outside the Kennedy Center. Rostropovich gets over $100,000 a year for his very part-time job with the National Symphony, plus much more from guest appearances and recordings. But if he offered to share any of this capitalist tribute with the underlings whose cause he appeared to endorse, he uncharacteristically failed to inform the media about it. Rostropovich has the most uncritical press of any public figure in Washington. This is partly a matter of politics, and partly an example of hick-town boosterism. He is invariably referred to as "the Maestro." Most Senators would happily trade press clips with Puksy, whose canine adventures are breathlessly chronicled. The Maestro himself can do no wrong. Leonard Bernstein declared that he had transformed the National Symphony, five minutes after he took the helm. "His performance with Isaac Stern of the Tchaikovsky Violin Concerto," the *Post* deadpanned a year ago, "was being pronounced 'the recording of the decade if not of the century,' even before it had been taped." What an amazing testament to the creative energies released by life in a free society! Especially when you consider that the Maestro (a great cellist, unquestionably) had very little conducting experience before he took over the NSO. It's like something out of Oral Roberts. "I sit in my Watergate apartment in Washington the other day," the great Maestro and political dissident said in explaining his love for our American way of life, "and the telephone rings and it is Jimmy Carter. We had a very nice and interesting talk." If there was any justice in the world, this sort of life would be enjoyed by every citizen of the Soviet Union.

I was surprised to see John Osborne, in his previous column, express disapproval of the "sport" of hunting. At least I assume disapproval was intended by his description of Jody Powell's favorite leisure activity as "shooting helpless animals." As I told John, this is just the sort of wishy-washy liberal sentimentality I would have thought he'd have no time for. Can his crusty image survive it? Mr. Gloppy Sentimentality himself, our president, apparently does not share this particular sentiment. There he was in the *Times* last week, photographed in Plains relaxing with a rifle, over the headline: "Carter Obtains Peace: Christmas With His Family." All the attention



drawing by Michael Crawford

paid recently to the growing power of new special interest groups has obscured the continuing political power of the weekend assassins and aspiring defenders of hearth and home who presumably compose the membership of that old special interest group, the National Rifle Association. Only last week they gunned down the Carter administration's nominee to be head of the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration, a federal pork barrel for local police departments and criminal justice consultants. Norval Morris, dean of the University of Chicago law school, favors federal gun licensing regulations. In light of this aberration, and the opposition it aroused, Attorney General Bell wrote him, "it is doubtful that the directorship of LEAA is the position from which you can be of most use." Gun fetishists did lose a small battle at the end of the last Congress when the tax bill eliminated the deductibility of hunting lodges. This is all that survived of President Carter's attempt to crack down on spurious business expenses, and even so "business" hunters will still be able to deduct the cost of dogs, guides, licenses and hunting rights. The argument is made that providing opportunities for festive slaughter is a necessary cost of high capitalism. Nothing like shared blood lust to cinch a business deal, apparently.

If what we tell potential advertisers about the lavish spending habits of our readers is even close to being true, many among you long ago tootled your Mercedes up to Bloomingdales and purchased a Cuisinart, the swank kitchen appliance from France. Fashionable friends in New York tell me that when this upper-class vegamatic first reached our shores several years ago, dinner guests in their circle were fed nothing but mush for months: soups, pâtés, pureed vegetables—anything that involved pulverizing food beyond recognition, except as the product of a Cuisinart. As an employee of *The New Republic*, I am naturally a disgrace to its demographics. But even liberal journalists—earnest, ascetic, unworldly: you know the type—occasionally revert to the broader American pattern of avid consumption. To be blunt, I was possessed: I just had to have a food processor. It's hard to say why. In the past, weeks have gone by—happy weeks—in which I haven't so much as grated a carrot. But suddenly I imagined giving elegant dinner parties: five courses, with no single piece of food larger than an eighth of an inch in any dimension. The cheap imitation I finally bought on sale at a discount store last month is called, rather defensively, "the American Food Processor." I got it home and ransacked the fridge for something to chop, coming up with nothing but an aged onion, which I put through the miracle machine. Then I sautéed it and threw it away. Since then the thing has sat reproachfully on the counter and done nothing noticeable for my lifestyle. It seems I must take the initiative. No doubt a real Cuisinart would be different.

M. E. K.

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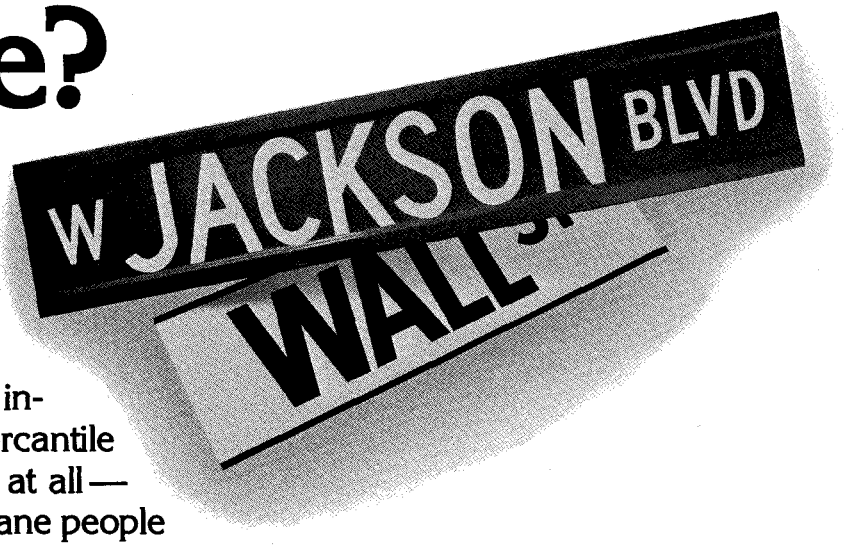

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